



CHILDREN'S DIGEST



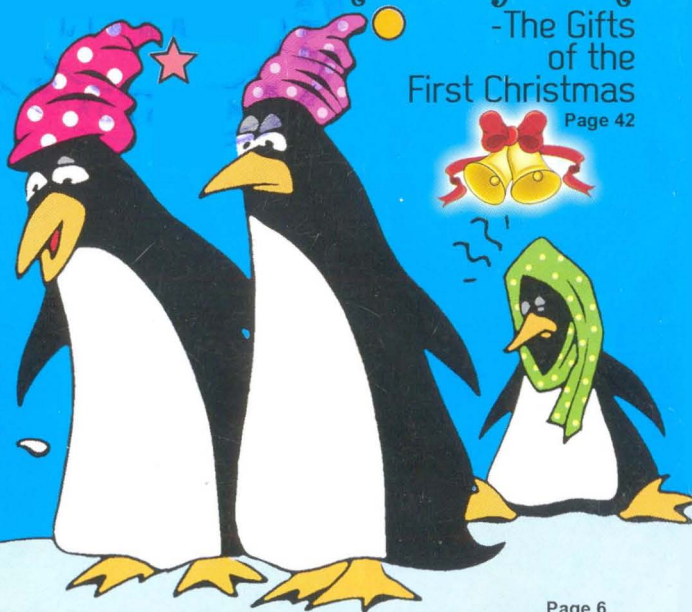
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Story

The Carol Singers



Happiness...
Laughter...
Entertainment...

Celebrate this festive season
at Wonderla with lots of fun!



Merry X'mas &
Happy New Year



THE AMUSEMENT PARK
KOCHI • BANGALORE

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Editorial

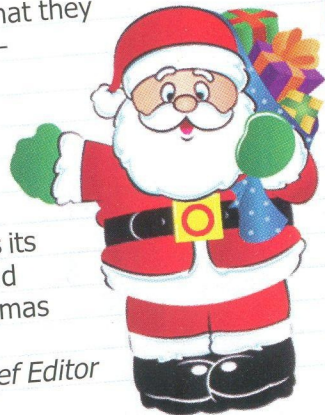


Christmas - the festival of goodwill and peace

The whole month of December is dominated by Christmas, the world's most celebrated festival. Attractive flickering lights, Christmas cards, enchanting decorations, delightful cakes and bakes and of course Santa Claus, the dearly-loved icon of Christmas, form part of the celebrations. Christmas, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, is a colourful festival of love and rejoicing.

However the real message of Christmas is above all this. It is about goodwill and peace, compassion and harmony as well as about loving, giving and sharing. These are virtues that you, as children, should learn to imbibe, so that they will help you succeed in life – morally, intellectually and spiritually. Remember, love and harmony build peace, while hatred and violence destroy it.

Children's Digest wishes its readers all the love, joy and peace of the festive Christmas season!



Chief Editor



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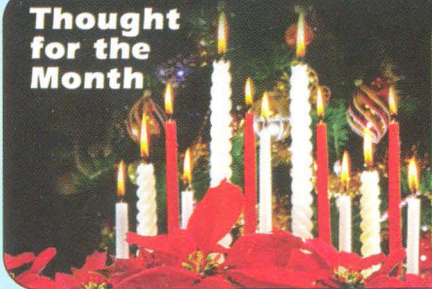
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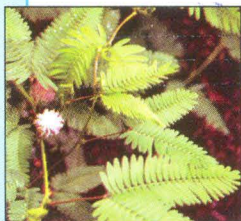
**Thought
for the
Month**



**The only blind
person at Christmas-
time is he who has
not Christmas in his
heart.**

-Helen Keller

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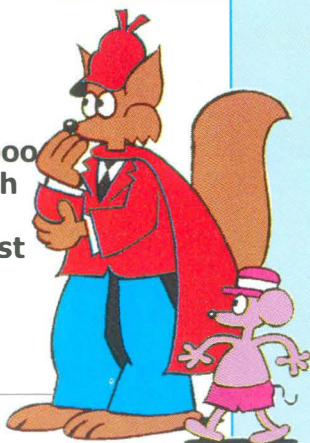
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Story

Every Christmas-eve, Rob, Fred and Micky sing in front of all the inhabitants of the ice pack. In return, they get a golden star to attach to the Christmas tree.

However, on this particular Christmas-eve morning, Micky gets up and starts to sneeze. "You'll have to sing without me tonight," he said, his voice all hoarse.

"Oh no!" replied his friends. "We can't do that!"

They had to find a solution to cure Micky, and quickly! The three friends went to see doctor Lolo. He sighed and said, "There's only one way we can cure this in such a short time..."

"How?" cried Rob and

Fred as one, as Micky gave yet another sneeze, burying his beak in his handkerchief.

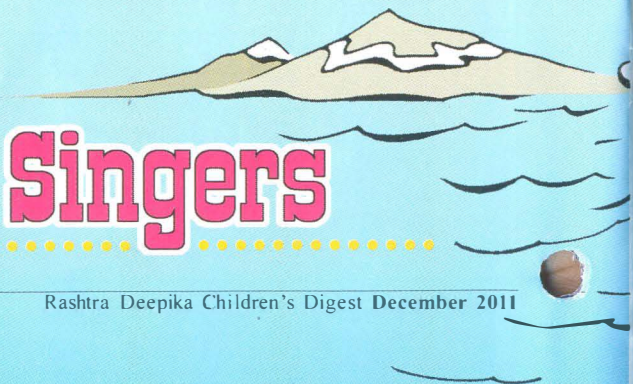
"The only thing that could cure this cold in a few hours is the golden seaweed to be found in the Indian Ocean," explained the doctor.

"But we're miles away from the Indian Ocean!" the little penguins said despairingly.

"So no Christmas carols this year then!" sniffed Fred, letting a tear fall into the icy water. Pincho, the little icefish, was so surprised by this warm, salty drop of water that had fallen into the cold waters, that he suddenly popped his head out of the sea.

"What's going on?" he asked. Rob and Fred told Pincho that Micky was ill and that the only thing that could

The Carol Singers



make him better was the golden seaweed from the Indian Ocean.

"The Indian Ocean!" exclaimed Pincho. "Hang on, I've got an idea... Give me a moment..."

And with that, the little icefish vanished back into the ice-cold water. In the depths of the Arctic Ocean, Pincho laid out his plan. There wasn't a second to lose.

With all the energy he could muster, the little fish sent signals out to all his friends all over the ocean.



They passed on the message, and in a few minutes, the message crossed the Arctic Ocean, then the Pacific Ocean, before finally arriving in the Indian Ocean. The butterfly fish were quick to spot the golden seaweed and fin-stroke by fin-stroke, they made their way to the Arctic Ocean.

It was barely midday when Pincho handed over the

golden seaweed to the little penguins. Micky gobbled down a cup of seaweed herbal tea and in no time at all, his voice was back.

Pincho was the hero of the hour and our friends got a huge round of applause too.

How proud they were to have the honour of attaching the beautiful golden star to the top of the Christmas tree once again!

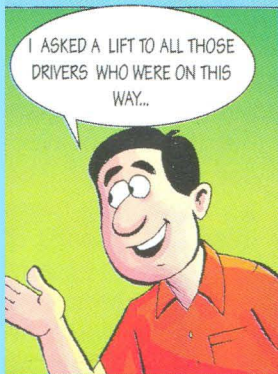
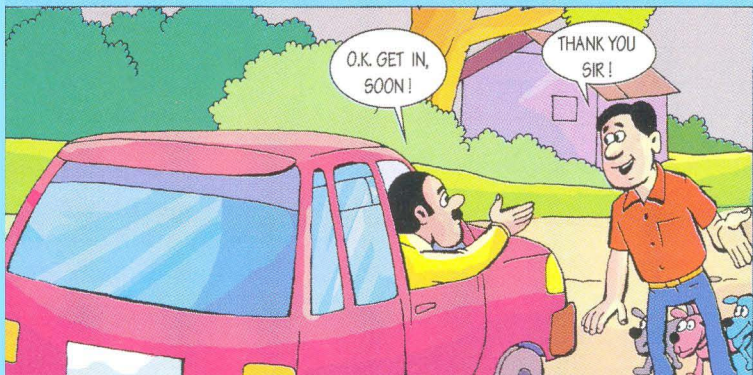
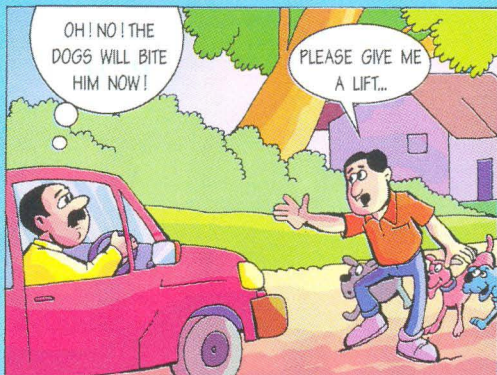
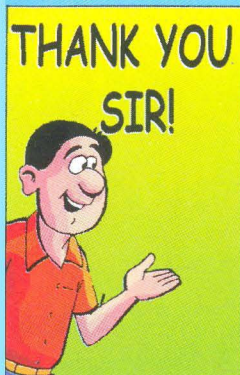
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Do You Know?

In 1975, the Banqiao Dam in China was among many dams that were destroyed after the extreme rains of Typhoon Nina. It is estimated that between 90000 and 230000 lives were lost as a result of the Banqiao Dam breaking.

The dam after it was destroyed.







Feature

Wool Yielding Animals

Wool is the fibre obtained from **sheep, goats, llamas, camels** and certain other animals, including **rabbits** and **cashmere goats**. It grows from follicles in the animal's skin, just like the hair which grows from our skin. It has some unusual qualities which make

it a very useful fibre. Its cells still carry on trying to stay in balance with the surrounding moisture even when the wool is no longer alive and growing. This is why wool is said to breathe. It absorbs and evaporates moisture. It is also soft but strong and resists dirt and tearing.

As with many discoveries of early man, anthropologists believe that the use of wool came out of the challenge to survive. In seeking means of protection and warmth, humans in the Neolithic Age wore animal pelts as





clothing. Finding the pelts not only warm and comfortable but also durable, they soon began to develop the basic processes and primitive tools for making wool.

People soon began to develop and maintain herds of wool-bearing animals. The wool of sheep was soon recognized as one of the most practical to use. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, wool trade prospered. The English had become proficient in the raising of sheep, while the Flemish

Do You Know?

The first animals tamed and kept for milk and meat were goats and sheep. Bones of these animals have been found with human remains in Iraq and Iran dating back to 8,500 BC.





Cashmere wool

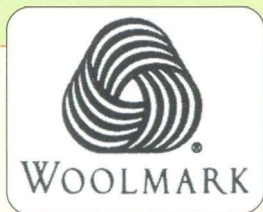
Cashmere wool, usually simply known as cashmere, is a fibre obtained from Cashmere and other types of goats. The word cashmere derives from an old spelling of Kashmir. Cashmere is fine in texture and strong, light, and soft. Garments made from it provide excellent insulation. The original undyed or natural colors of cashmere wool are various shades of grey, brown and white.

(an ethnic group speaking Flemish that lives in northern and western Belgium) had developed the skills for processing. As a result, the English began to sell their wool to the Flemish, who processed the raw material and then sold it back to the English.

While most people picture only sheep when they think of wool, other animals also produce wool. Various camels, goats, and rabbits produce hair that is also classified as wool.

The fleece is removed from the animals with special clippers. This is called shearing. The shearer aims to remove the fleece in one piece. This usually takes only a few minutes. After the fleece has been shorn, it is examined for quality and then graded. The sheep will grow a new coat for the following winter and can be shorn again.

What for centuries was a small



The 'woolmark' is the International Wool Secretariat's symbol for products made from pure new wool. It is one of the world's best-known trademarks.

home-based craft, has grown into a major industry, with Australia, Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand serving as the major suppliers of raw wool. While the United States is the largest consumer of wool fabric, Australia is the leading supplier. Australian wool accounts for approximately one-fourth of the world's production. The annual global output is now estimated at 1.3 million tonnes. Though cotton is the number one plant used for fabrics and the number one fibre overall, the number one source of animal fibre is still wool.

Sheep

The sheep was one of the first animals to be domesticated, over 10,000 years ago. The value of the sheep for making warm clothing and carpets led people to keep sheep, and breed them to retain their wool into the summer-time. Woolly sheep such as the **Merino** have fine wool suitable for clothing as well as coarse hair for carpets. Australia, New Zealand and South America have the right climate and the right pastures for sheep rearing and there are vast sheep farms or 'stations' there.

There are now more than 800 breeds and over 680 million domestic sheep.

Do You Know?

The quality of wool is determined by the following factors: fiber diameter, crimp, yield, colour, and staple strength. Fiber diameter is the single most important wool characteristic determining quality and price.



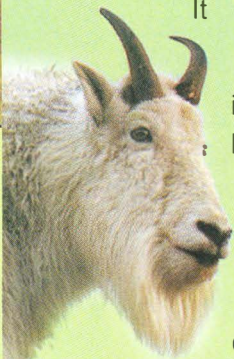
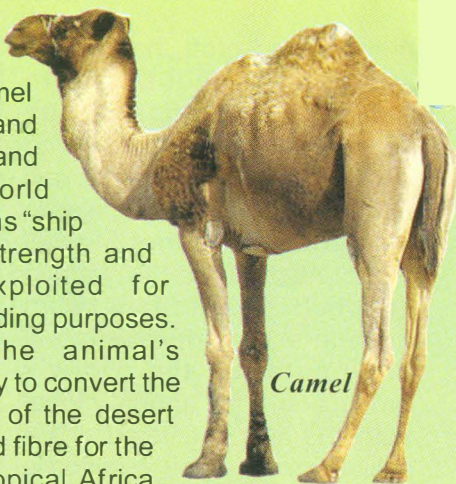
*Merino
sheep*

Camels

The versatility of the camel and its ability to survive and perform in the harsh arid and semi-arid areas of the world have earned it names such as “ship of the desert”, while its strength and docility have been exploited for agricultural, transport and riding purposes.

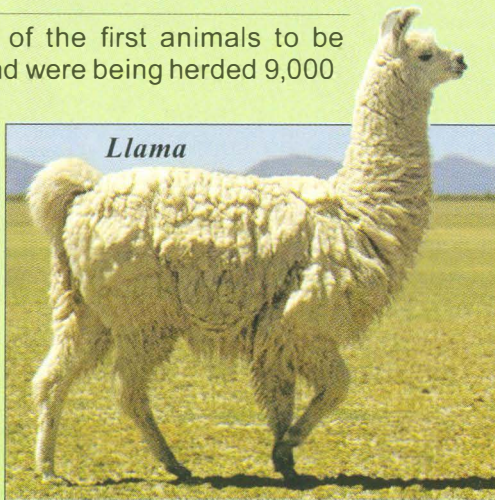
It is, however, the animal's unparalleled ability to convert the scanty resources of the desert into milk, meat and fibre for the pastoralists of tropical Africa and Asia that have gained it the most reputation.

Camel hair is light and durable and has low conductivity. It is thus considered excellent for making blankets and other warm garments. The best hair is supposed to come from young animals.



Goats

Goats were one of the first animals to be tamed by humans and were being herded 9,000 years ago. They are a member of the cattle family and are believed to be descended from the wild goat, bezoar. They are cloven-hoofed animals that feed on plants, chewing the cud (ruminating) as cows do.



Goats are usually stockily built, with coats made of thick, often coarse hair, to protect them from the cold and fierce winds of their upland homes. The coats of Angora and Kashmir (cashmere) goats are used to produce wool for garments. Now there are many varieties of tame goats, kept for milk, meat and skins.

Llamas

The llama and its close relative the alpaca, are grazing animals which live in open, dry country from Peru to the southernmost tip of South America. They are related to camels, though they have no hump.

Alpacas and llamas are valued for their long, fine wool. Llamas are also used to carry heavy loads in high mountain areas. Their blood contains more red blood cells than that of any other animal.

Rabbits

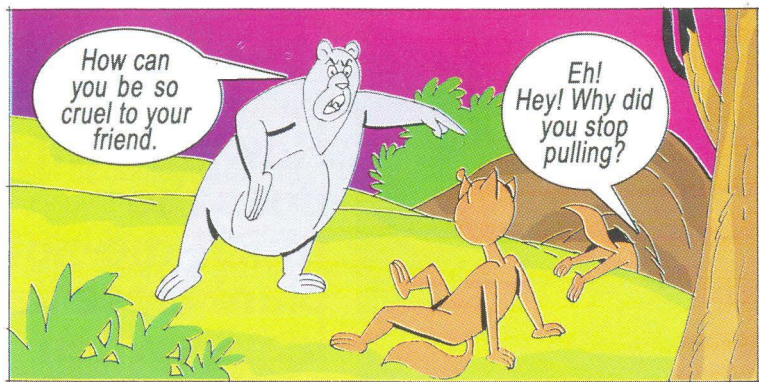
The Angora rabbits are a variety of domestic rabbit bred for their long, soft wool. They have a humorous appearance, as they oddly resemble a fur ball with a face.

The Angora is one of the oldest types of domestic rabbit, originating in Ankara, Turkey, along with the Angora cat and Angora goat. The rabbits were popular pets with French royalty in the mid 18th century and spread to other parts of Europe by the end of the century. They are bred largely for their long Angora wool, which may be removed by shearing, combing, or plucking. The value of Angora wool is 50 times that of sheep wool. t

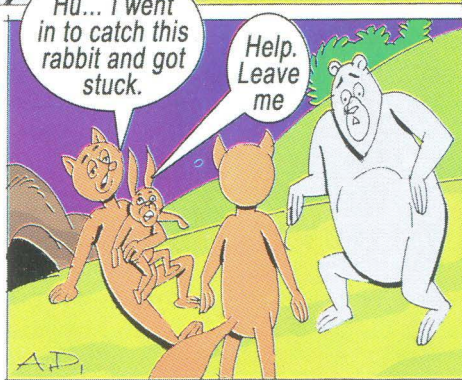


LEAVE
ME!





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This
and That



How and why does the touch-me-not plant close its leaves when we touch it?

The touch-me-not or sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*) is a source of fascination for young and old alike for its tendency to droop perceptibly on being touched. As soon as one touches its leaflets, they instantly fold together, and the leaf stalk droops. This sets off a chain reaction, with several leaf stalks falling one on top of another, sometimes causing the collapse of the whole plant! But this is only a temporary phenomenon; the plant slowly returns to normal within half an hour if left alone.

For hundreds of years, scientists have studied the touch-me-not plant in a bid to understand the mechanism behind its movements. It was discovered that the movements are the result of a rapid loss of pressure in strategically situated cells that cause the leaves to droop right before one's eyes. While all the details are still not known, it is believed that when the plant is touched, its cells flash electrical signals to certain fluid-filled structures at the base of the leaflets, known as pulvini. The pulvini cells respond by flushing out potassium and water. With the massive loss of water, the

Do You Know?

One out of every eight letters you read is the letter 'e'.

pulvini bend over and the leaflets fold.

Why does the plant exhibit this kind of movement? This, too, is a matter of conjecture. The most obvious explanation is that it is a protective measure. Grazing animals would find the folded and drooped leaves unattractive and would move on to other plants. Also, folded and drooped leaves exchange less heat and water than fully expanded leaves, and this might have some survival value when the plants are under environmental stress.

What are adverbs and how are they used?

An adverb is a word that modifies the verb in a sentence. In other words, it gives us some information about the verb. Take the following examples:

The old man walked *awkwardly*. (How did the old man walk?)

He goes to the park *daily*. (How often does he go to the park?)

Ram met Shyam *yesterday*. (When did Ram meet Shyam?)

In all these cases, the words marked in italics are adverbs. As you can see, an adverb indicates manner, time, place, cause, or degree and answers questions such as 'how', 'when', 'where', 'how much'.

Adverbs are often created from adjectives by adding 'ly' to the end of the adjective. Thus, words like *quickly*, *impatiently*,



efficiently, for example, can be identified as adverbs. However, two aspects must be borne in mind here – many words and phrases not ending in *-ly* also serve an adverbial function, and an *-ly* ending is not a guarantee that a word is an adverb. The words *lovely*, *lonely*, *motherly*,

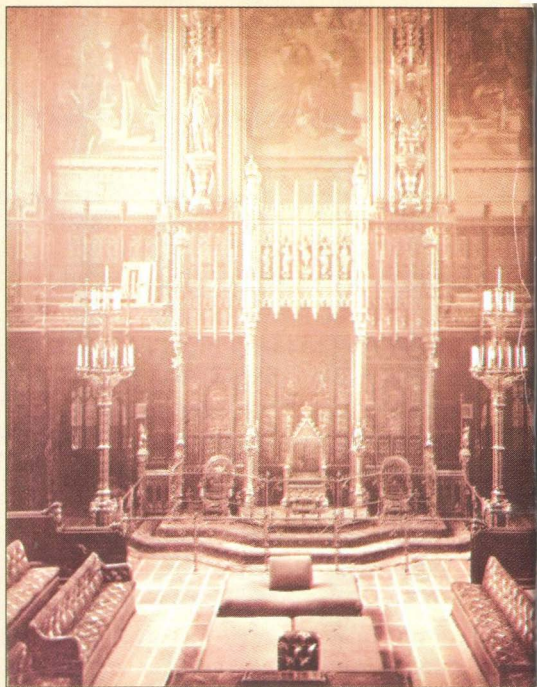
and *friendly*, for instance, are adjectives, not adverbs.

Adverbs can be divided into three types – *adverbs of manner* (‘well’, ‘badly’, ‘carefully’), *adverbs of time/frequency* (‘then’, ‘always’, ‘soon’, etc), and *adverbs of place/position* (‘here’, ‘there’, ‘upstairs’, ‘down’ etc). t

The Lord Chancellor's Woolsack

The Lord Chancellor in Britain's House of Lords sits on a seat called the Woolsack. It is made of wool covered with red cloth, and is said to have been introduced in the 14th century to remind people of the importance to England of the wool trade.

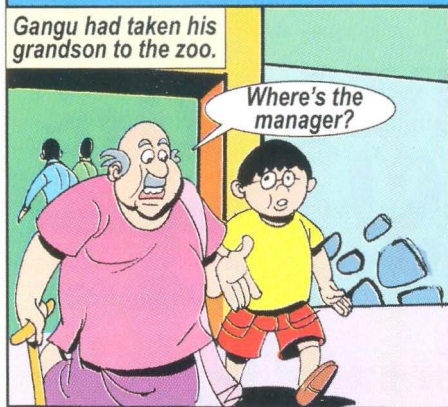
The Woolsack (with back-rest) can be seen facing the throne in the upper foreground, in front of the judges' woolsack.



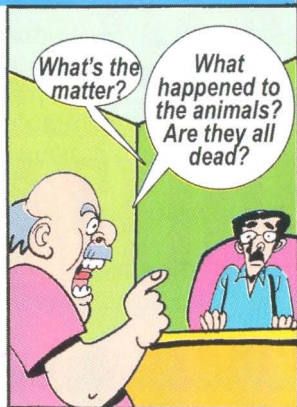
THE EMPTY Z



Gangu had taken his grandson to the zoo.



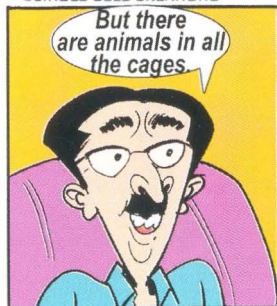
Where's the manager?



What's the matter?

What happened to the animals? Are they all dead?

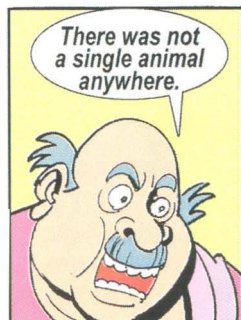
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But there are animals in all the cages.



We roamed the place for two hours.



There was not a single animal anywhere.



Grandpa, you forgot your specs.

WIN ATTRACTIVE PRIZES!

**FUN
TIME**

PIRATE Game

Hello little friends,

Here is an interesting game for you - a 'Fun Game' that brings to you wonderful gifts. So, get started and win your gifts.

Find out how many smaller words you can form from the word

PIRATE



Attractive Prizes!

Two entries with the highest number of words will get a surprise gift. Besides, there are three consolation prizes, too! So rush your answers on a postcard to:

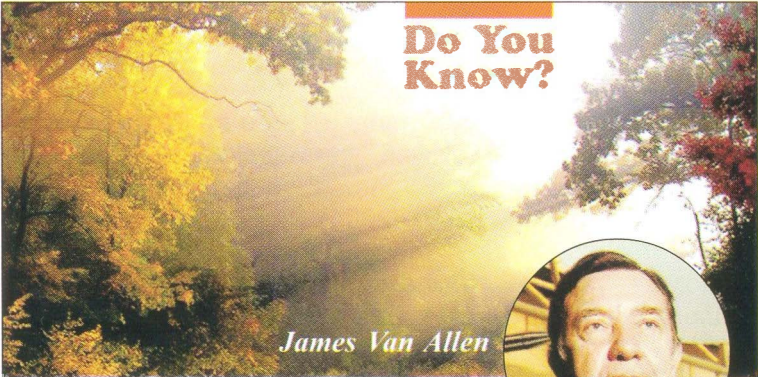
**The Editor, Fun Time, Rashtra Deepika Children's Digest,
P.B. No. 7, Kottayam, Kerala.**

N.B.: Don't forget to put your address on the card. Also please don't repeat any letter more than the number of times it has appeared in the word.

Winners of **SCARF Game**

1. A. Chellan Nimesh, Std XI A, Christhu Raja Hr. Sec. School, Marthandam-629165.
2. Aravind G Krishnan, Std VIII A, St. Raphael's Cathedral School, Chakkanthara, Shornur Road, Palakkad-678006.
3. Suneena A. Kumar, C/o Mr. Arun Kumar, 57, Yesudian Street, Nagercoil-629001.
4. Nandita M.D., No.11 1st Cross, O.T.C. Road, Balepet, Bangalore-560053.
5. Arpitha Anna Mathew, Std V B, St. Thomas English School, Gudalur, The Nilgiris.

Congratulations, dear young winners!



Do You Know?

James Van Allen

The Sun gives off huge amounts of deadly radiation, but we are protected from the worst blasts by a magnetic cage called the magnetosphere that surrounds the Earth. Inside this cage, two doughnut-shaped bells trap the electric particles. These are called the Van Allen belts after their discoverer, James Van Allen.



Great
Lives



THE QUEEN OF SONG



Who am I, a mere Prime Minister, before the queen of song?

These words, representing the greatest compliment anyone could pay a musician, were spoken by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, about the immortal singer, M. S. Subbulakshmi (1916 – 2004).

Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi was born on September 16, 1916 in the temple town of Madurai. Her mother, Shanmukhavadiyu, was a veena player who had to support a large family on her limited income. Subbulakshmi had a brother and sister. Life was tough as the family led a hand-to-mouth existence, and the mother was extremely strict

Do You Know?

Tungsten has a very high melting point; after carbon it has the second highest melting point of all elements.

with her children. But the home was rich in music. Her mother was always practising; visiting musician friends sang or played various instruments; music from the neighbour's radio flowed in through the window, to be eagerly absorbed by young Subbulakshmi (the family being too poor to own their own radio).

When she was in the fifth standard, Subbulakshmi was unjustly beaten by a teacher for an unknown offence. This incident upset her so much that she fell ill with whooping-cough. With this, her formal schooling ended. However, she continued to learn music. Soon, she was performing along with her mother as a vocal accompanist in the latter's veena concerts. Her melodious voice and innocent demeanour began to draw people's attention, and before long, she started giving solo performances.

In the 1930s, Subbulakshmi shifted to Chennai with her family to develop her musical career. In Chennai, she met the eminent journalist and

freedom fighter, Thiagarajan Sadasivam. They fell in love and got married in 1940. Sadasivam was a widower whose family consisted of two daughters, an orphaned niece and nephew, an old grandmother and many other relatives. Subbulakshmi took charge of the family and won everyone's hearts with her love. Her elder stepdaughter, Radha became her inseparable companion, accompanying her in all her concerts and providing

Do You Know?



Meteors burn up in the atmosphere and filter down to Earth as dust. The total weight of the Earth increases in weight from this dust by about 25 tonnes each day, which adds up to 9,125 tonnes each year.

lifelong emotional support.

As Sadasivam was a staunch nationalist, Subbulakshmi too was drawn into the freedom movement. Rousing national songs were part of her concerts, and the couple were close to national leaders. She met Mahatma Gandhi and sang *bhajans* for him. Shortly before his assassination, Gandhiji asked her to sing his favourite *bhajan*, "Hari tum haro". When Sadasivam told him that she did know that particular song and requested him to get it sung by someone else, Gandhiji responded, "I should prefer to hear it *spoken* by Subbulakshmi than *sung* by others." Such was the magic of Subbulakshmi's melodious

voice!

As time passed, M. S. Subbulakshmi's fame grew. Her husband, whom she described as her "friend, philosopher and guide", was her mentor who organised her concerts and guided and moulded her music to perfection. She strode like a colossus in the world of Indian classical music, with a rich repertoire that spanned pure classical music, soulful *bhajans*, and *slokas* from the scriptures. Her singing charmed laymen and connoisseurs of music alike. But through all the adulation, she retained her humility and her eagerness to learn.

Another hallmark of the singer was her philanthropy. Austerity was a way of life with

Do You Know?

Metal pipes often burst when the water inside them turns to ice. This is because water expands when it freezes. It also becomes lighter. If ice did not float on water the seas would gradually turn to ice and no life would be able to survive on Earth.



the couple and they lived simply. Through her recordings and concerts, Subbulakshmi donated generously to a range of national,

philanthropic and public causes. These donations, when totalled up and converted to present values, would run to crores of rupees. Her philanthropy was legendary, and it was in the fitness of things that the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service was conferred upon her in 1971.

Honours and awards were heaped upon her. These included the country's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, the President's Award, Padma Vibhushan, Kalidas Samman, Fellowship of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, doctorates from several universities, the Hafeez Ali Khan Award and the Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration.

In the 1980s, Subbulakshmi began withdrawing from public concerts, performing only for exceptional causes. The greatest tragedy in her life came with the demise of her husband in 1997. She stopped singing after that.

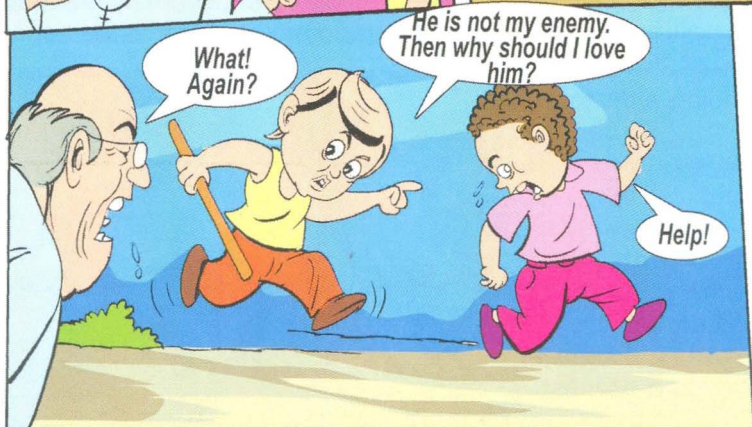
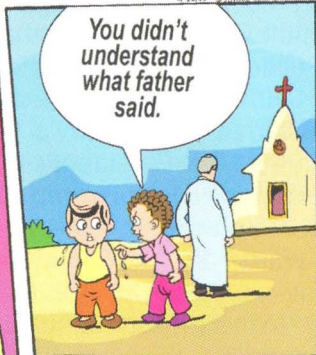
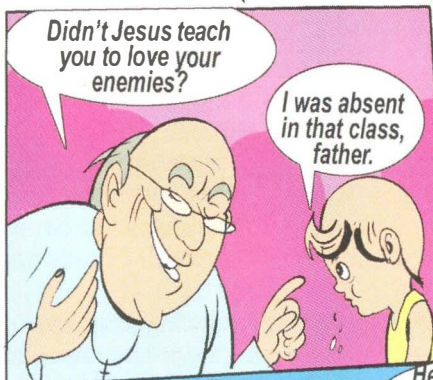
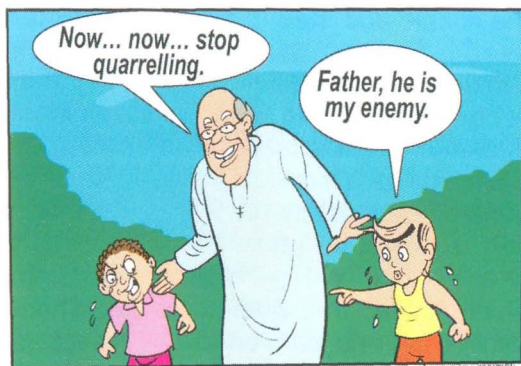
In December 2004, M. S. Subbulakshmi fell ill with pneumonia and went into a coma. On December 11, the great singer breathed her last.

t

Do You Know?

While aluminum is the most common metal found in the Earth's crust, the most common metal found on Earth is iron, mostly because it makes up such a large part of the Earth's core.







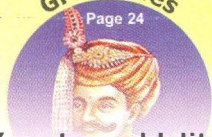
CHILDREN'S DIGEST

Feature

Page 8

Three Important Words!!!

Great Lives
Page 24

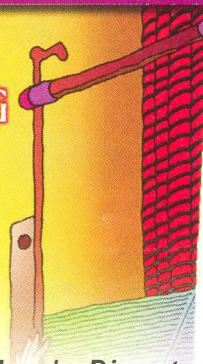


Stories from World
Mythologies

THE WEAVING CONTEST

Page 36

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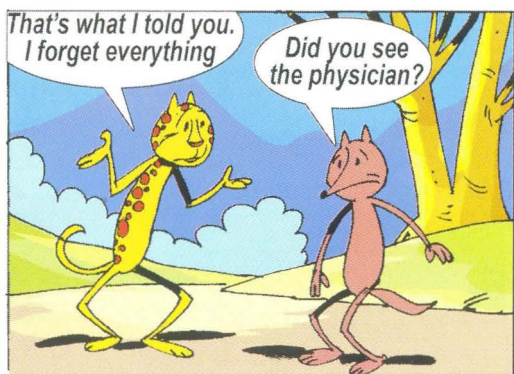
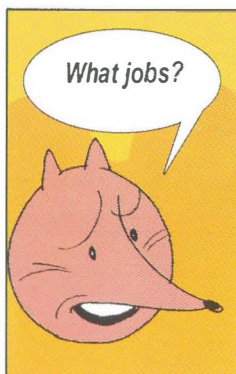
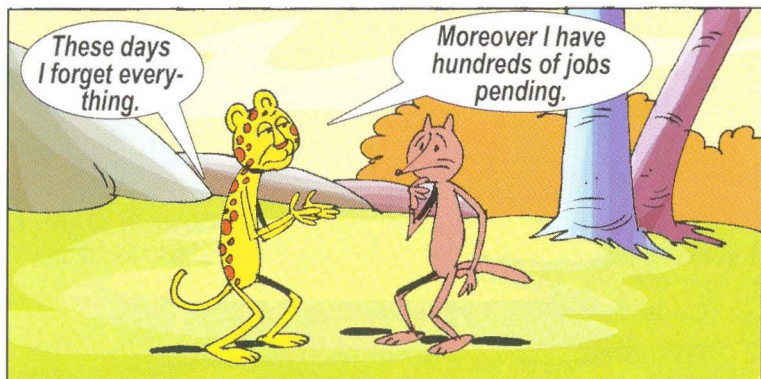
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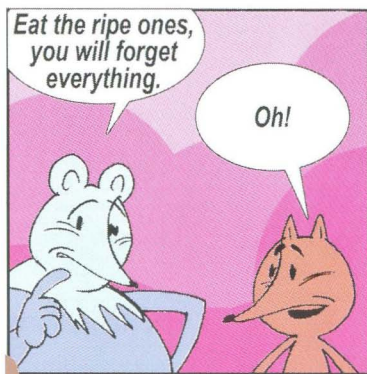
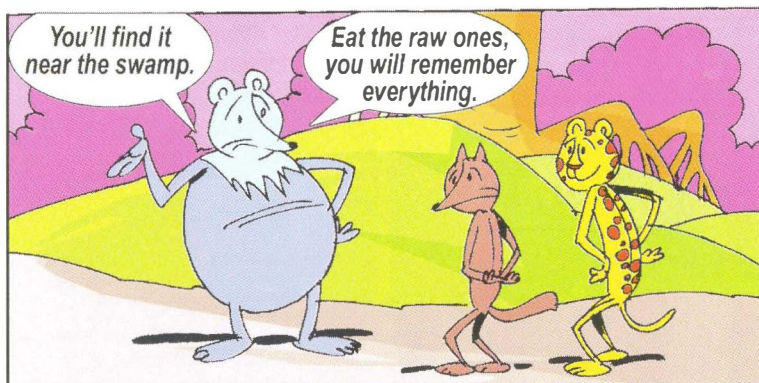
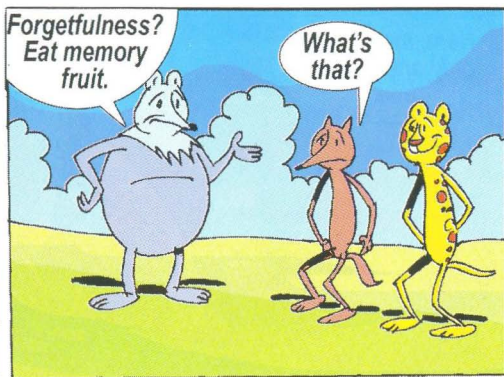
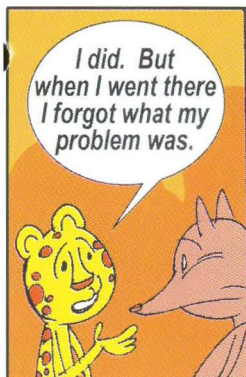
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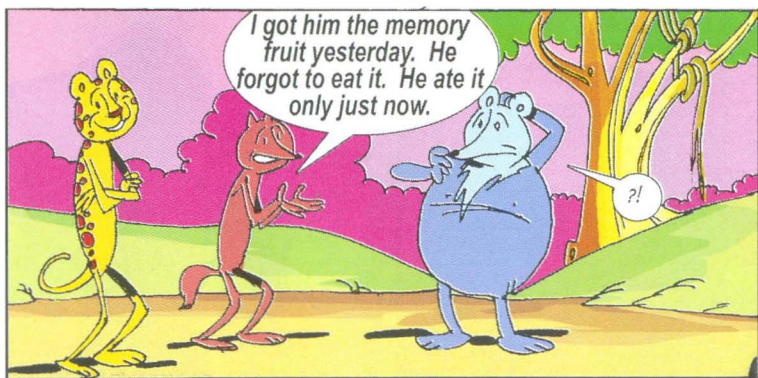
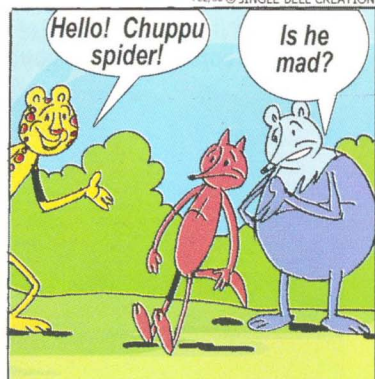
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Drawing : SIMI MUHAMMA







F22/08 © JINGLE BELL CREATION



FUN

with
WORDS

Crack the code

Each of the peculiar words or letter-number combinations given below represents a popular phrase, saying or word. Can you unscramble the word-play and decipher what each one means?

- 1) AALLLL 2) Insult + Injury 3) Noon good
4) HAHANDND 5) LANG4UAGE 6) ME REPEAT 7) i 4 i

Treasure Hunt

Given below are the names of some precious stones. The only problem is that the vowels in their names have gone missing. How many of them can you identify?

- 1) CRL 2) PL 3) SPPHR 4) RBY
5) MRLD 6) GRNT 7) MTHYST 8) JD 9) DMND

(See page 97)

- *Rajee Raman*



Do You Know?

No tree dies of old age. They are generally killed by insects, disease or by people. California Bristlecone Pines and Giant Sequoias are regarded as the oldest trees and have been known to live 4,000 to 5,000 years.



Places of Interest

- Prof. George John Nidhiry

VATICAN CITY – ROME

Within the City of Rome, the Capital of Italy, there is a small Sovereign State, the City of Vatican. Its total area is 110 acres and the population just above 800 ! It was established by a treaty signed between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy in 1929.

The Vatican City is ruled by

Do You Know?

Bronze is a metal alloy made from copper and tin. Copper makes up the larger amount, usually between 80 to 95%.

the Bishop of Rome – the Pope. It has its own currency, its own postal system and even a news paper, the 'L'Osservatore Romano'. The history of the Vatican starts with the martyrdom of St. Peter, the Bishop of Rome in AD 67. He was crucified by Emperor Nero in the circular open air stadium, known as Nero's Circus. It was the site of the first organized state sponsored martyrdom of Christians. A small shrine was built in the 2nd century over the spot where St. Peter was killed. Here Emperor Constantine erected a Basilica in the 4th century. In 1506, architect Bramante designed the new St. Peter's Basilica. St. Peter's Square in front of the Basilica, completed in 1666, is the work of Bernini. In the Square there are two big statues of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Outside the Basilica there are two big beautiful equestrian statues of Charlemagne and Constantine. There is also an ancient Egyptian Obelisk of the 13th century BC, brought to Rome by Emperor Caligula

in AD 37. This monument, which witnessed the martyrdom of St. Peter, is called 'The Witness'. You can enter the Basilica through a side door. The main door, 'The Holy Door', is opened only during great celebrations. Inside the Basilica, whose internal area is 3.75 acres, there are many huge statues of saints and popes. Each statue is a wonderful example of artwork. Two important works are the bronze statue of St. Peter and Michelangelo's 'Pieta'. One foot of the statue of St. Peter is largely worn away by pilgrims kissing it for centuries. In the Vatican grotto beneath the Basilica there are more than hundred tombs of popes and other dignitaries. The Sistine Chapel, the best known site in the Vatican, constructed by Pope Sixtus IV is decorated by beautiful paintings by famous painters like Botticelli, Roselli, and Perugiano. The paintings, the Creation of Adam, Original Sin etc. on the ceiling and the Last Judgment on the altar wall are by Michelangelo. There are also other museums that contain paintings by Raphael, Leonardo, and Caravaggio. The center of attraction in the archaeological collection is the 1st century AD Greek original sculpture, 'the Laocoon' in the Octagonal Courtyard.



A contest was being held to end the long period of anarchy following the death of the able monarch, Uther Pendragon, and to find a successor. The challenge for the contestants was to pull out a magnificent sword thrust deep inside a massive anvil (conjured up magically by the great enchanter, Merlin). A prestigious tournament for knights was held on the eve of the contest. Among the participants was Sir Kay, a promising young knight and son of Sir Ector, a renowned nobleman. His squire was his 18-year-old brother Arthur.

In the tournament, Sir Kay fought valiantly but was disconcerted when his sword

unexpectedly broke, leaving him at his opponent's mercy. He retreated and asked Arthur to get him a replacement urgently.

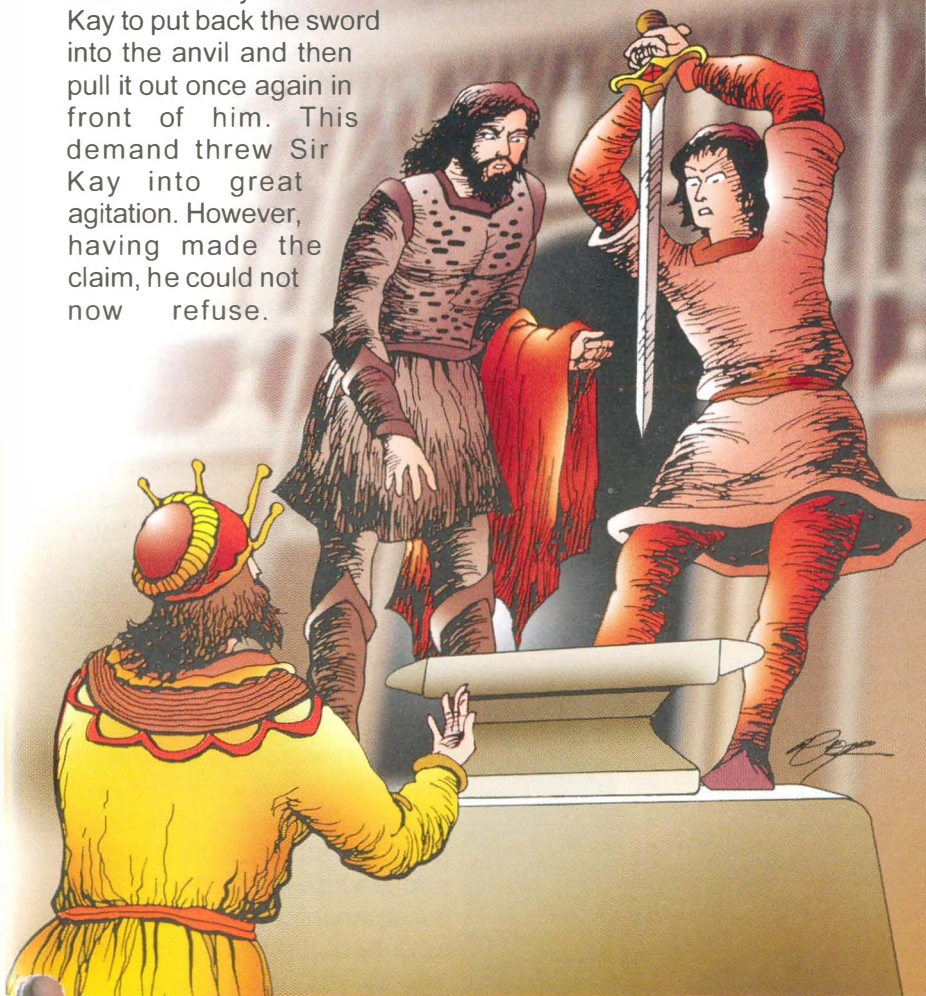
Unable to find a sword anywhere, Arthur suddenly remembered the one in the anvil before the cathedral. Unobserved by anyone, he rushed to the spot, pulled out the splendid sword and brought it to his brother.

Sir Kay was astonished. Realising that his brother was too innocent to understand the greatness of his own feat, he shrewdly decided to cash in on the latter's achievement and corner the glory. He called his father aside, showed him the sword, and lied that he had pulled it out of the anvil himself.

However, Sir Ector, who was no fool, instantly smelt



something fishy. He frankly told Kay that he would not believe his story unless he saw him performing the feat with his own eyes. He asked Kay to put back the sword into the anvil and then pull it out once again in front of him. This demand threw Sir Kay into great agitation. However, having made the claim, he could not now refuse.



Willy-nilly, he set out for the cathedral with the sword, accompanied by Sir Ector and Arthur.

On examining the anvil, Sir Kay was shocked to find it smooth and unscarred. There was no hole to indicate the spot from which the sword had been pulled out.

Knowing full well that his task was an impossible one, Kay repeatedly tried to thrust the sword into the anvil. But as expected, his thrusts did not even dent the anvil. Defeated, he had to finally step down and confess to his father that he could not do it. Sir Ector took him to task, asking him why, if he had indeed pulled out the magic sword, he found it impossible

to put it back. Sir Kay had nothing to say.

At this point young Arthur, who had been watching everything silently, spoke up, asking if he could get a chance to thrust the sword back into the anvil. Astonished, Sir Ector asked him how he believed he had a chance of succeeding where his elder brother had failed. In answer, Arthur came out with the truth – he informed his father that it was in fact he who had pulled the sword out of the anvil for his brother.

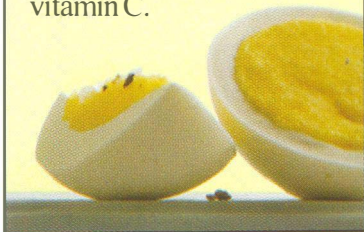
When he heard this, a strange expression crept into Sir Ector's eyes. He stared at Arthur so oddly that the latter was quite frightened.

"Father," cried Arthur, "why are you staring at me in such a peculiar manner? Are you angry with me?"

Recovering his wits, Sir Ector hastened to reassure him. "No, no, my son," he said earnestly, "I swear I'm not angry with you." After a pause, he went on, "If you wish to make an attempt with the sword, you may certainly do so."

Do You Know?

All known vitamins are found in eggs except vitamin C.



Arthur walked up to Kay, who was standing shamefacedly by, and took the magic sword from him. He then jumped nimbly up on to the block of marble.

For a moment, Arthur stood with the sword poised, staring down at the anvil. Then, he stabbed at the anvil with all his might.

Lo and behold! Like a knife penetrating a lump of butter, the sword plunged swiftly and smoothly into the very heart of the anvil. After thrusting it deep inside, Arthur pulled it out effortlessly. Finally, with a flourish, he thrust it back once again into the anvil as he had done before.

On seeing all this, Sir Ector exclaimed aloud in amazement, "Almighty God! What is this miracle my eyes behold?"

As Arthur descended from the block of marble, Sir Ector fell to his knees in front of him and knelt with palms joined together. On seeing this, Arthur was taken aback. In a pain-filled voice, he cried out, "My father! My father! Why do you kneel down before me,

your son?"

Sir Ector replied, "I am not your father. And now, it is clear that you are definitely of exalted origin, and that royal blood flows in your veins – otherwise, you could never have handled that sword the way you have done."

This terse proclamation from the man he had always considered his father fell on Arthur's ears like a bolt from the blue. He was so distressed that he burst into tears and wept as if his heart would break.

"Father, father, what are you saying?" he sobbed. "Please, please, I beg of you – get up, and don't kneel before me!"

Slowly, Sir Ector rose to



Do You Know?

Healthy nails grow about 2 cm each year. Fingernails grow four times as fast as toenails.



Know Your Fruits

THE MARVELLOUS MANDARIN

The mandarin orange (*Citrus reticulata*) is a highly popular species of orange that is distinguished by its thin, loose peel. Believed to be a native of south-east Asia and the Philippines, the mandarin made its way to Europe, Australia and America in the 19th century. The mandarins or Chinese officials wore robes of a deep orange colour resembling that of the fruit's peel, which is how it got its name. It is also known as tangerine. This

name comes from the Moroccan port city of Tangier, from where large shipments of mandarin oranges were sent to America in the late 19th century.

The world's major mandarin orange producers are China, Spain, India, Japan and Italy. In India, the mandarin orange is the most commonly grown citrus fruit, occupying nearly 40% of the total area under citrus cultivation in the country. It is cultivated in Maharashtra and Punjab in the north, Coorg, Wayanad, Palani hills and the Nilgiris in the south, and the Khasi hills of Assam in the east. The Nagpur mandarin, grown in the Satpura hills in the Vidarbha region, is one of the best mandarins in the world.

The tree is a small to medium one that has dense foliage and is generally

his feet. Tenderly caressing the weeping boy's chin, he asked, "Arthur, why are you crying?"

"Because I am afraid,"

answered Arthur, trying to compose himself.

All this while, Sir Kay had been standing by like a man in a trance, gaping at the

thorny. It starts bearing fruit by the fourth year, but takes 10 to 12 years to attain the level of full bearing. Flowers grow singly or in clusters. The size of the fruit varies from place to place, depending on climatic and soil conditions. The fruit is round, with a loose peel that turns bright orange when ripe. The pulp is enclosed in numerous segments with thin, membranous walls. It is very juicy, and sweetens on ripening. Embedded in the pulp are numerous small, pointed white seeds.



The mandarin orange is a highly nutritious fruit, as it is low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium and high in antioxidants such as carotenes, luteins, vitamin A and vitamin C (which gives immunity against coughs and cold). Further, it is rich in dietary fibre.

The mandarin orange is widely consumed as a fresh fruit. Further, it is processed to make canned segments in syrup, beverages such as squash and syrup cordial, jams, marmalade and jellies. The fresh fruit is also used in salads, puddings and cakes. An essential oil extracted from the peels is used as a flavouring agent in various foods and beverages, for cosmetics, soaps and perfumery. It also has various medicinal uses.

other two in incredulous amazement. "Are my ears playing tricks on me?" he said to himself. "My brother, a king! Can it be really true?"

Then Sir Ector spoke up, saying, "Arthur, the time has now come for you to know the truth about yourself."

(To continue)



Feature

-Sabu Abraham

Christmas, which falls on December 25th every year, is probably the most celebrated festival in the universe. It commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, who was born over 2000 years ago, around 6 B.C., at Bethlehem in the

service said at midnight on the eve of Christ's birth. It later became known in Old English as 'Christes Masse' (Christ's Mass), from which is derived the name, 'Christmas'.

The celebration of Christmas is as much about compassion and harmony as it is about loving and giving. It also reminds us to forgive as Jesus forgave and spread the message of brotherly

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh

-The Gifts of the First Christmas

land of Judea. Jesus' birth, amazingly, was predicted and written about, over seven hundred years before he was born!

The name Christmas is believed to have originated in the medieval ages during which time its celebration took the form of a special prayer

love, goodwill and peace. It is a season of good cheer and mystical joy all around.

Among those who came to see and worship Jesus were three wise men from the East. Being astrologers, they had seen a special star in the sky, now known as the Star of Bethlehem, and interpreted it

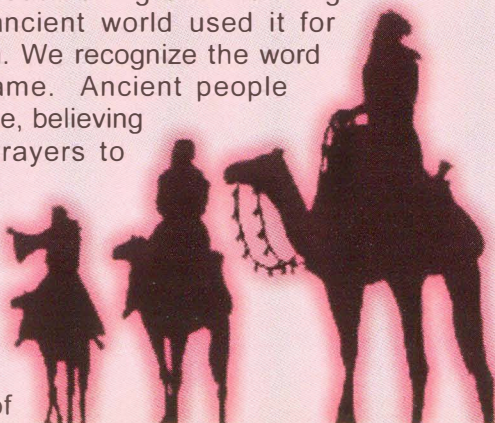
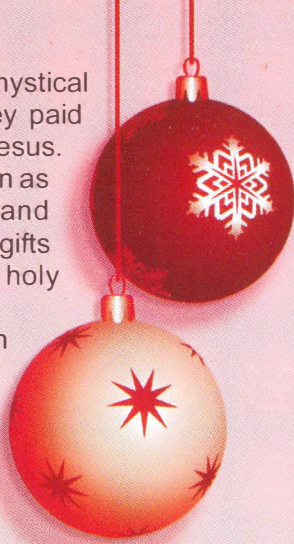
as signifying the birth of a king. The mystical star led them to Bethlehem, where they paid homage to and worshipped the child Jesus. These three wise men, collectively known as the Magi, namely Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar, brought with them precious gifts which they humbly presented to the holy child.

The gifts given by the three wise men to Jesus were very symbolic:

GOLD: Perhaps the most sought-after metal across all cultures and civilizations from very ancient times and considered a gift fit for royalty. It thus symbolized power and kingship.

FRANKINCENSE: Frankincense was the symbol of divine authority and priesthood. This resin is also known as olibanum, derived from the Arabic al-lub ("the milk") which refers to the milky sap tapped from the Boswellia tree. Frankincense has been renowned for its special medicinal and soothing properties. Herbalists say it is calming, restorative and meditative. Frankincense oil is believed to have stimulating, soothing and warming properties. The ancient world used it for treating depression. We recognize the word 'incense' in its name. Ancient people burned frankincense, believing it to carry their prayers to heaven. Its presentation symbolized holiness and priesthood.

MYRRH: This is perhaps the most mysterious of





Points to Ponder

-George Pullankav CMI

Destiny

As a boy, Napoleon Bonaparte was very short and ugly-looking. His friends used to tease him. He felt very sad. At the same time, it made him determined to prove to the world that he was a worthy person.

When he was 14 years old he went to a palmist and asked him to predict his future. The palmist looked at the boy's palm and with a sad face said, "Boy, I am sorry, you do not have any lines on your palm. You cannot become anything worthy in your future."

Napoleon went home disappointed. He spent a lot of time deep in thought. He so desperately wanted to become someone worthy. At last, after a lot of pondering, he took a knife, cut his palm and made a few lines. Then he went back to the palmist,

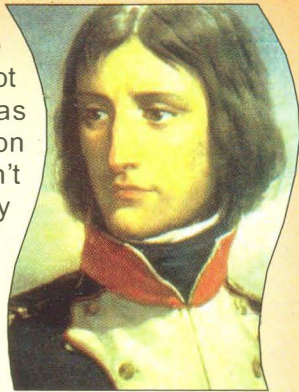
the three gifts. It is a resin produced by a small, tough, scraggly tree known as the commiphora that grows in semi-desert regions of North Africa and the Red Sea. It is considered a wound healer because of its strong antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. The Chinese used it for centuries to treat wounds, bruises and bleeding and to relieve painful swelling. The Egyptians later

made it famous, having acquired myrrh about the fifteenth century B.C. from Africa, where commiphora trees were abundant. They used it in incense, perfumes and holy ointments and also medicinally. But its most notable use was that of an embalming material, used in Egyptian mummies. As an embalming ointment, Myrrh signified sacrifice and death. In fact, Myrrh was one of the

and showed him his hand.

The palmist was shocked to see the boy's bleeding hand. He did not know what to say. When he was about to say something, Napoleon stopped him and said, "Sir, you don't have to say anything about my future. My future is in my hands and I will chart out my own destiny."

He had discovered that his own firm determination and sense of responsibility were going to influence his future more than the palmist's prediction. And as we all know, Napoleon went on to become the emperor of France and one of the most famous figures in world history...



*No one else can tell or make our future or destiny.
We have to make it ourselves.*

burial spices of Jesus.

It is this historical event of offering gifts by the Magi that has actually served as an inspiration for the tradition of giving gifts at Christmas, which has now become an integral part of the celebrations.

Nowadays however, the real message and symbolism of Christmas and the First Christmas Gifts often gets overtaken by the magnitude

of its celebration; in the form of Christmas cards, Christmas trees, Santa Claus giving away gifts, delightful decorations, colourful flickering lamps, melodious carols, beautiful cakes and bakes, family get-togethers, fireworks and crackers, etc. Thus, the rich tradition of giving gifts at Christmas, started by the three wise men lives on, for generations to cherish and emulate. t

Butterflies

I was walking through the garden
When I saw a bunch of butterflies
I was struck by their beautiful wings
They were flitting among the flowers
They were like a group of angels
I felt like I was in heaven
I tried to catch them
But they didn't let me catch them
It was an unforgettable experience in my life.

- **Vishnupriya C.K.**, Std VI A, St. Joseph's Anglo Indian Girls' Higher Secondary School, Calicut-673032.

The door stood ajar
In the rustling night
He had been called
To the divine gates
The divines stood apart
For their love was priceless
Heaven opened before
the wandering soul
His sins had been forgiven
For we all are sinners
The Lord strode down
The holy face settled in compassion
For he was a sinner
Lost in heaven.

- **Rohan Gopakumar**, Std V C, St. Thomas Residential School, Mukkolakkal, Trivandrum.

LOST
IN
HEAVEN



A Little Bird



The sound that I heard
Came from a little bird
I saw it near a brook
Its colour was pink and blue
I tried to catch the bird
But I couldn't
It flew away fast
But its song I heard
And it was more lovely than any
known sound.

- **Tamanna Talukdar**, Std IX,
Vivekananda Kendra Vidyalaya,
Sunpura, Arunachal Pradesh.



Spring

Spring is the season of joy
The trees are in full bloom
I see flowers in my room
There is summer in the air
And lovely are the days.

- **Gayathri S., Std VIII B,**
Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kanjikode,
Palakkad.

Dream

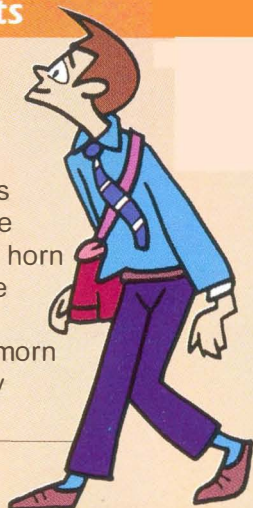
When I see the
 blue sky
Filled with clouds
When I see the birds
Going to their nests
When I see the sun
Setting in the hills
I think about my life.
When the night arrives
I see the sky
Filled stars and
I think about my life
I watch the moon
Smiling at me and
I slowly fall asleep
Everything is like
A dream to me,
A dream that will
Come only once in life.

-Anisha Anilkumar,
Std X E, Vimala Hridaya
Higher Secondary
School, Kollam.

School Boy

I love to rise in summer morns
When birds sing on every tree
The distant huntsman sounds his horn
And the skylark sings with me
O! What sweet company.
But to go to school in a summer morn
And in a classroom sit all day
Oh, it drives all joy away.

- S. Vignesh, Std VIII B,
Kendriya Vidyalaya, New Delhi.



At the time of sunset
I looked up at the sky
And saw it painted in colours
The colours changed from red to pink
Black to blue, and yellow to melon.
After a few minutes
The colours started to fade
Do you know the reason ?
One of the cruel sages was jealous
Of the sage who painted the sky
And thought of destroying the painting
And splashed a dark blue colour over the painting
The setting sun was frightened and ran away
And a darkness filled the world
And I ran to my bed,
To my own world of sweet dreams!

- Madhurya H.S., Std VIII A, Stella Maris High School,
Bangalore - 560088.

Colours of the Sky





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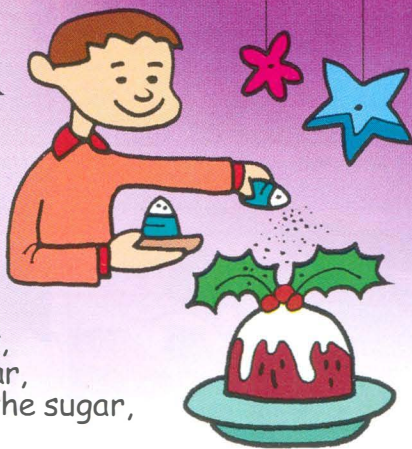
Write to:

*The Editor, Rashtra Deepika Children's Digest,
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*Lines that
Rhyme*

Christmas Pudding

Christmas Pudding,
Christmas Pudding,
Steaming hot,
steaming hot,
Sprinkle on the sugar,
sprinkle on the sugar,
Eat it up, eat it up.





YOUNG ARTISTS



Md. Abrar Suhail, V A.



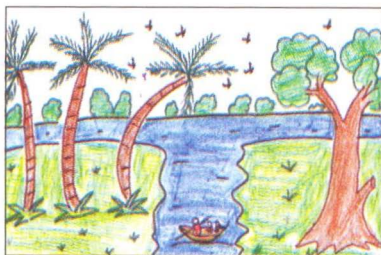
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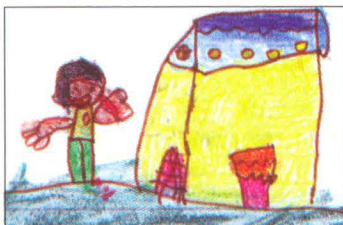
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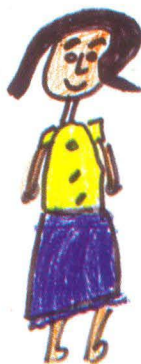
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Annie Mary Thomas, III B, St. Mary's Residential Central School, Ramankulangara.



Vaishnavi, Kanyashala, VI, Satara, Maharashtra.

P. Swetha, VI D, Vedavalli Vidyalaya, Walajapet-632513.



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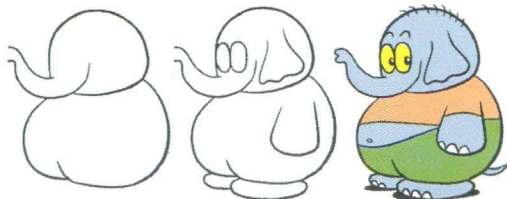


S. Aaisha, IV B, Sishya School, Thally Rd., Hosur-635109.



Sruthi P., X E, GVHSS, Thiruvilwamala, Thrissur.

How to Draw an elephant



THE DEMON FOREST

The demon tried to hit Vasantha with his club. Vasantha dodged. The demon tried again.



Vasantha then leapt high...



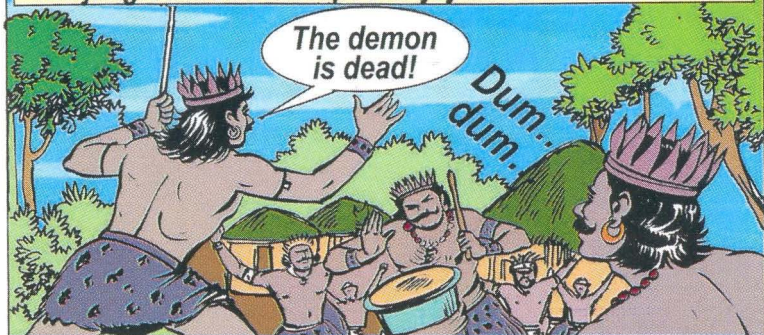
...and grabbed the demon's neck and slit his throat.



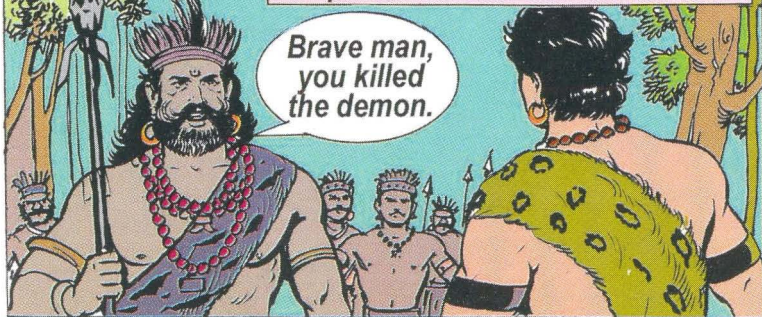
The demon fell down dead.



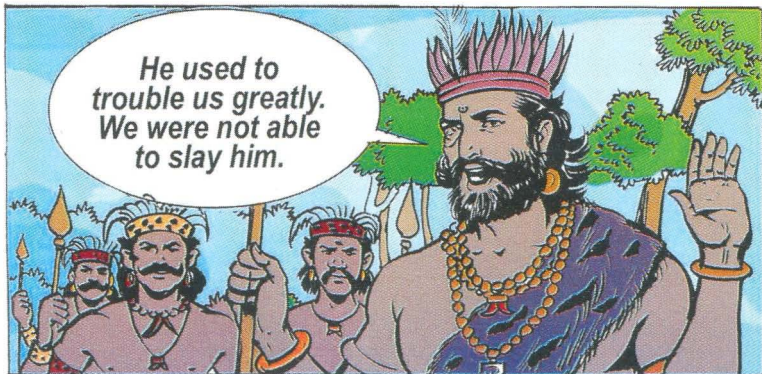
The jungle tribesmen leapt with joy when the demon died.

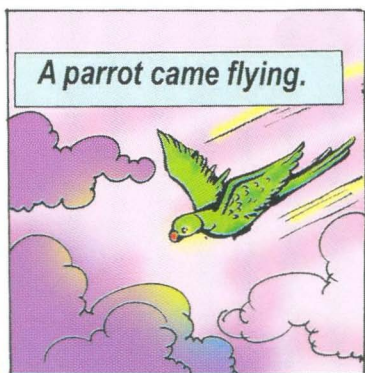
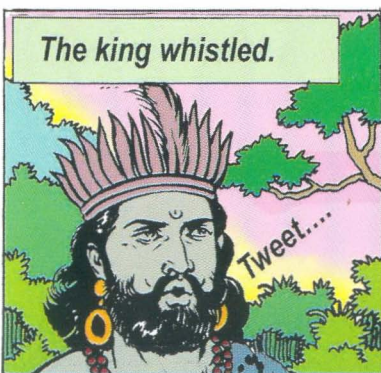
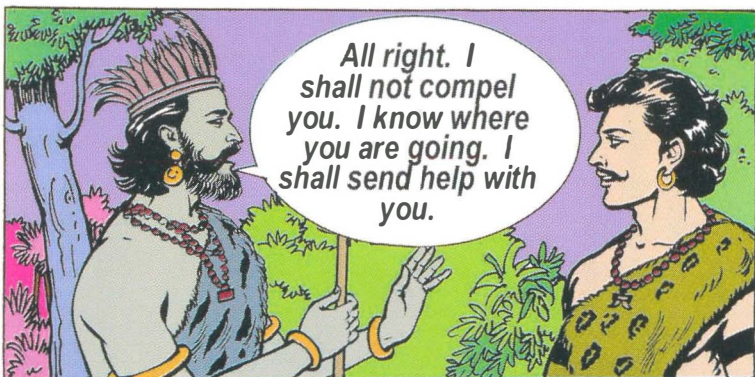
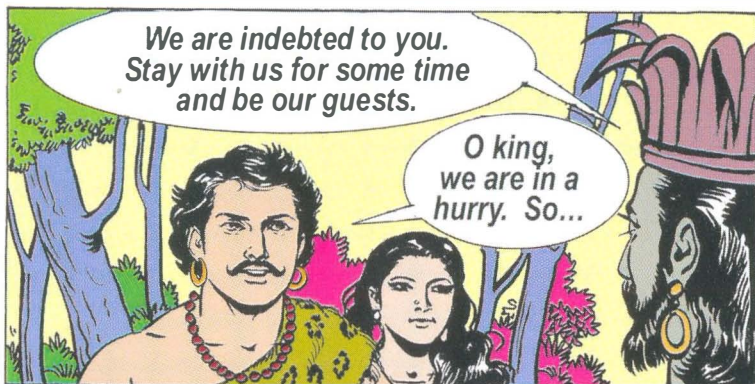


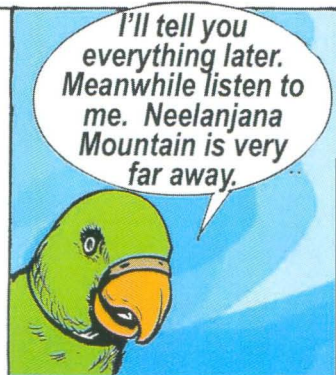
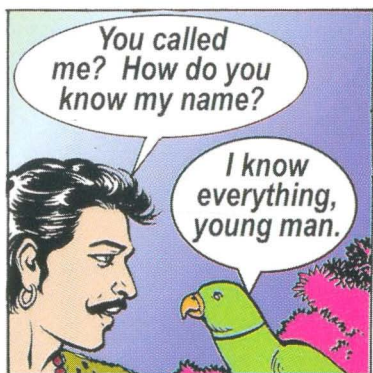
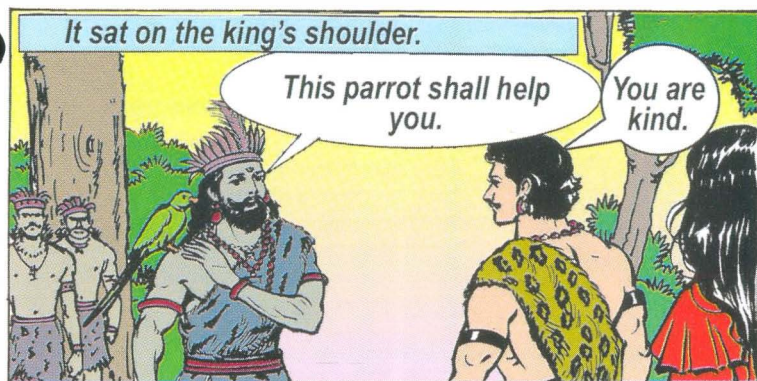
Their king went to Vasantha and the princess.

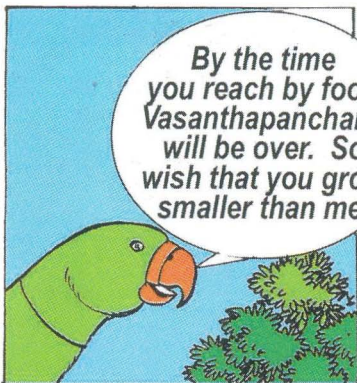


He used to trouble us greatly. We were not able to slay him.

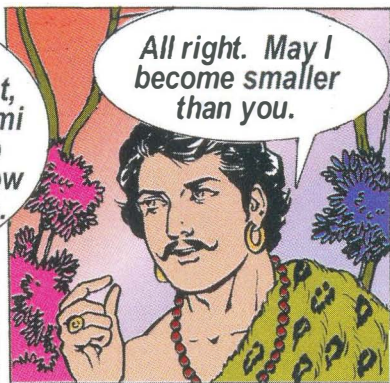








By the time you reach by foot, Vasanthapanchami will be over. So wish that you grow smaller than me.



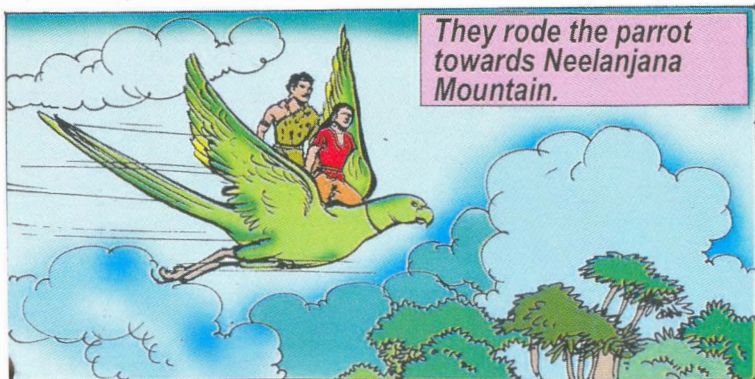
All right. May I become smaller than you.

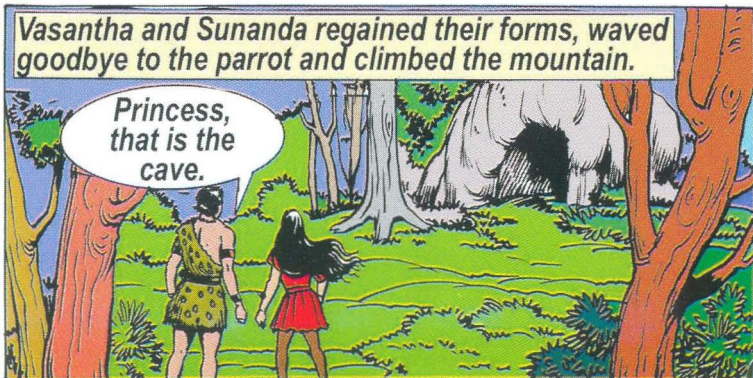
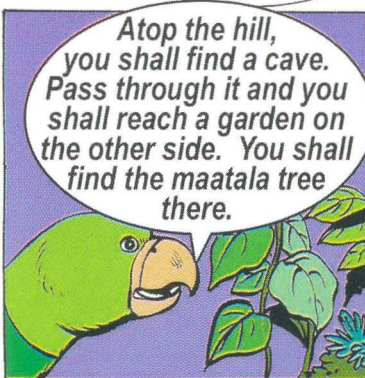
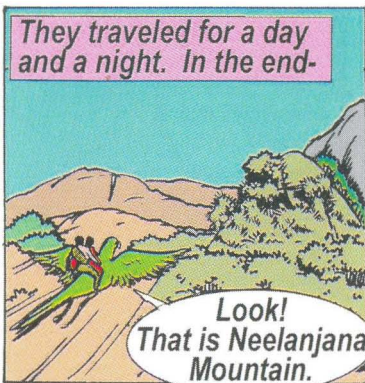


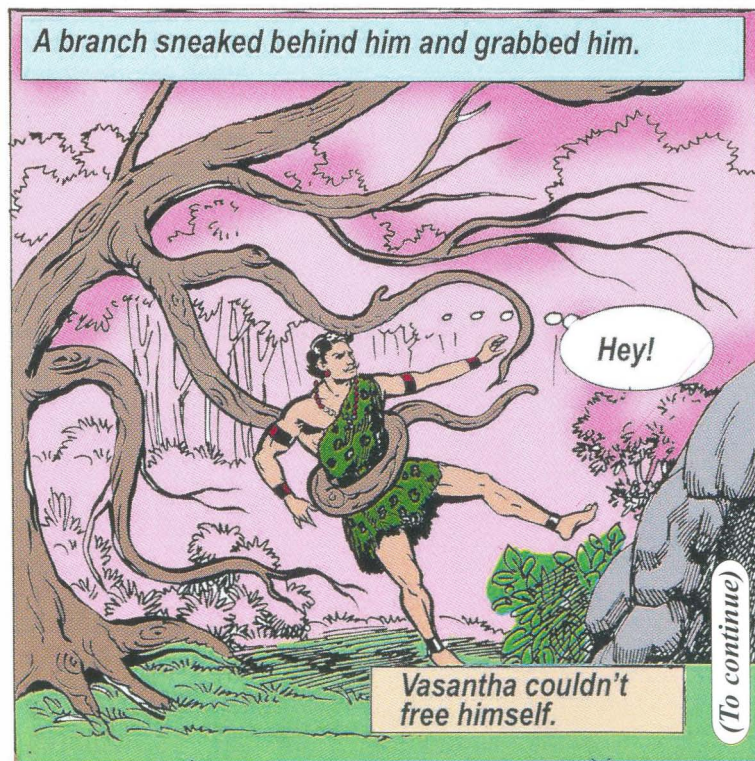
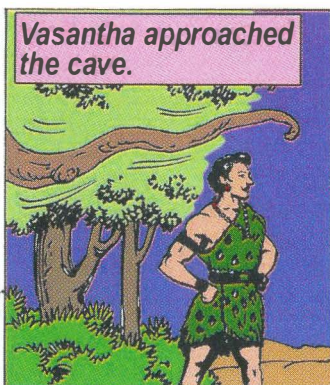
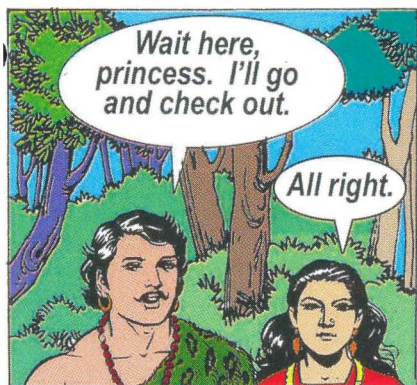
In no time, Vasantha was smaller than the parrot.

Young man, did you forget? This is the power of the ring that you are wearing.

Oh! I forgot about that.









Gallery of Scientists

- P. Gopalakrishnan

Lorenzo Romano Amedeo Carlo Avogadro was born in Turin, Italy, on 9th August, 1776. He was the son of Count Filippo Avogadro and Anna Maria Vercellone. His father was a distinguished lawyer and civil servant,



becoming a senator in 1768, and was appointed advocate general to the senate in 1777. At that time Turin was under French rule and in 1799 he was made president of the senate.

Amedeo Avogadro went to school in Turin. Coming from a family of well established lawyers, Avogadro studied law, and became a bachelor of law in 1792, at the age of just 16 years. Four years later he gained his doctorate in ecclesiastical law and began to practice.

In spite of his successful legal career, Avogadro also showed an interest in natural philosophy (science) and in 1800 he began private studies of mathematics and

Lorenzo Romano Avogadro

**Author of the
Molecular Theory of
Chemical Reactions**

physics. His first scientific research in 1803, undertaken jointly with his brother Felice, was on electricity.

In 1806, Avogadro was appointed demonstrator at the Academy of Turin, and in 1809 became professor of natural philosophy at the college of Vercelli. In 1820, when the very first chair of mathematical physics in Italy was established at the University of Turin, Avogadro was appointed to that post. Unfortunately, this was short lived, since political changes suppressed the chair and Avogadro was out of a job by July, 1822. The chair was eventually re-established in 1832, and Avogadro was re-appointed to the position in 1834. Here he remained until his retirement in 1850.

Avogadro had succeeded to his

father's title of Count in 1787. He married Felicita Mazzé, and they had a total of six children. Avogadro led an industrious life, and was a modest man, working in isolation. This probably contributed to his relative obscurity, particularly outside Italy. Avogadro died on the 9th July, 1856. He was religious, but not a bigot.

In order to understand the contribution that Avogadro

Do You Know?

Trees grow from the top, not from the bottom as is commonly believed. A branch's location on a tree will only move up the trunk a few inches in 1000 years.



made, we must consider some of the ideas being developed at this time. Chemistry was just beginning to become an exact science. The **Law of Definite Proportions** and the **Law of Multiple Proportions** were well accepted by 1808, at which time **John Dalton** published his *New System of Chemical Philosophy*.

Dalton proposed that the atoms of each element had a characteristic atomic weight, and that it was atoms that

were the combining units in chemical reactions. Dalton had no method of measuring atomic weights unambiguously, so made the incorrect assumption that in the most common compound between two elements, there was **one** atom of each.

At around this time, **Guy-Lussac** was studying the chemical reactions of gases, and found that the ratios of volumes of the reacting gases were small integer numbers. This provided a more logical



Logimagic

THE UMBRELLA CROSSING

Seema and Kamala are walking to school along with their younger brothers, Shyam and Kishore. To reach the school, they have to cross a bridge. Just as they reach the foot of

the bridge, it starts raining.

The four children have only one umbrella between them. As it is a small one, the umbrella cannot be shared by more than two people at a time.

Since the children have come too far to turn back, they decide to cross the bridge by sharing the umbrella by turns. (Those who are waiting can shelter under trees by the bridge). This involves two children walking across and one coming to bring back the umbrella, and

method of assigning atomic weights. Guy-Lussac did not carry through the full implications of his work. However, Dalton realised that a simple integral relation between volumes of reacting gases implied an equally simple relation between reacting particles. Dalton still equated particles with atoms, and could not accept how one particle of oxygen could yield two particles of water. This was a direct threat to the relatively new atomic theory, and therefore Dalton tried to discredit the work of Guy-Lussac.

In 1811, Avogadro published an article in *Journal de physique* that clearly drew the distinction between the molecule and the atom. He pointed out that Dalton had confused the concepts of atoms and molecules. The “atoms” of nitrogen and oxygen are in reality

so on. The umbrella has to be carried back – there can be no shortcuts like throwing it across.

Each child walks at a different pace. Thus, when a pair walks across, their speed will be the speed of the slower of the two. Seema can cross the bridge in 1 minute, Kamala in 2 minutes, and Shyam in 5 minutes, while Kishore takes a full 10 minutes to cross.

There are less than 20 minutes left for the school bell to ring. What is the shortest time in which all four can cross, sharing the umbrella, and how do they do it?

(See page 97)



“molecules” containing two atoms each. Thus two molecules of hydrogen can combine with one molecule of oxygen to produce two molecules of water.

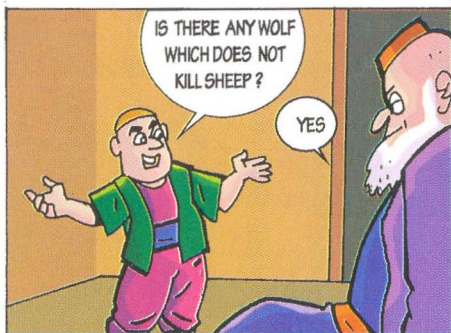
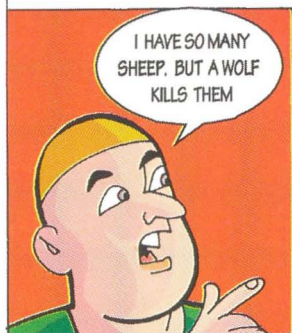
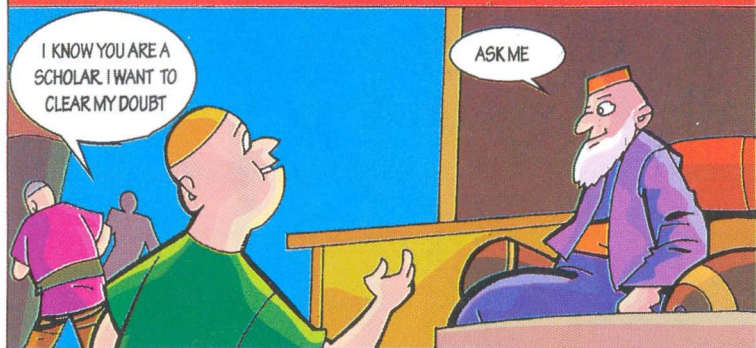
Avogadro suggested that equal volumes of all gases at the same temperature and pressure contain the same number of molecules, which is now known as Avogadro’s Principle.

The work of Avogadro was almost completely neglected until it was forcefully presented by **Stanislao Cannizzaro** at the Karlsruhe Conference in 1860. He showed that Avogadro’s Principle could be used to determine not only molar masses, but also, indirectly, atomic masses.

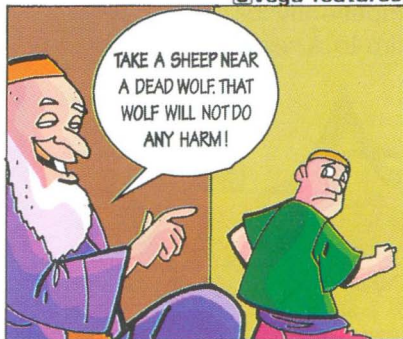
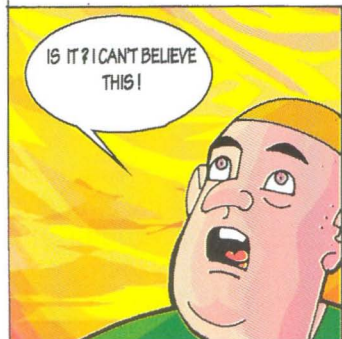
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THE WOLF AND SHEEP



©vega features





A Nasruddin Hodja Tale

It was a tranquil morning and Nasruddin Hodja was busy with his routine chores. Unexpectedly, a messenger from the Sultan landed at his door to inform him that he was wanted at the royal court urgently.

Wondering what could have necessitated such an urgent summons, Nasruddin Hodja quickly got ready and boarded the carriage that had been sent for him. The coachman cracked the whip, and the horses were soon flying like the wind. Before long, they reached their destination.

At the palace, Nasruddin Hodja found the Sultan waiting impatiently for him. After waving him to a seat, the Sultan began

without preamble, "Nasruddin Hodja, our kingdom is facing a crisis!"

"Why, what's the matter, Your Highness?" asked Hodja anxiously.

"Have you heard of the great scholar, Ahmed Ibn-Musa?"

Nasruddin Hodja nodded.

"Well, he is in a bid to establish himself as the greatest scholar in the world. After having visited all the neighbouring kingdoms and defeated in debate every single learned man there, he's now reached our kingdom. He has thrown a challenge for us – he is ready to take on the finest brains of this kingdom in a contest of wits. If he wins, we have to acknowledge his supremacy. That would be utter humiliation for us!"

"Surely such a situation wouldn't arise, Your Highness," said Nasruddin Hodja consolingly. "Our own scholars are erudite and gifted – many of them, more so than Ibn-Musa. One of them could certainly defeat

A trial of wits

him in a contest!"

Throwing him a distraught look, the Sultan said, "The problem is that not one of our scholars is ready to face him in a contest. They've all backed out, citing various

excuses!"

"I see!" said Nasruddin Hodja.

After a moment's thought, he said reassuringly, "Don't worry, Your Highness! I'm



Do You Know?

One tree can filter up to 27 kg of pollutants from the air each year.

ready to face Ibn-Musa in a contest tomorrow."

The Sultan was rather uncertain, but Hodja reassured him that he was confident of victory. It was finally decided that the contest would be held the next morning, in the grounds adjacent to the palace, and would be open for public viewing. After once again assuring the Sultan that he would not let him down, Nasruddin Hodja left for his village, promising to reach the venue on time the next day.

Next morning, a crowd had gathered at the venue to watch the contest. On an elevated platform in their midst sat the anxious Sultan, with the haughty Ibn-Musa next to him.

As promised,

Nasruddin Hodja arrived on time, riding his donkey.

On seeing the rather shabbily dressed old man, Ibn Musa's lips curled up with scorn. Was this the "great scholar" the Sultan had mentioned?

Without appearing to notice anything amiss, Hodja dismounted and walked briskly up to him. The Sultan made the introductions, and the two contestants greeted each other and took their seats.

Nasruddin Hodja confidently said, "You may ask me any question you like, and I'll answer."

Ibn-Musa began the debate with the question, "Where is the centre of the earth?"



Without batting an eyelid, Hodja pointed to a spot before him and said, "Right here. If you don't believe me, you can measure the earth yourself!"

The great scholar was taken aback, but only for a moment. Recovering his wits, he launched into the next question. "How many stars are there in the sky?"

"As many as there are hairs in my donkey's tail," answered Hodja confidently.

"Well, then, how many hairs does your donkey's tail have?"

"As many as there are in your beard!" answered Hodja.

"Prove it!" shot back Ibn-

Musa.

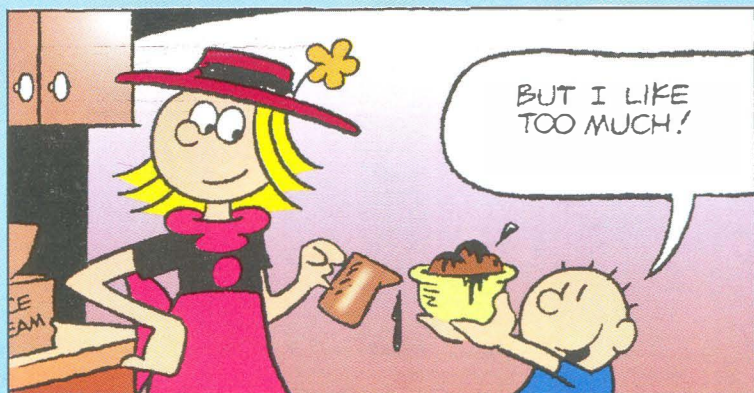
"All right," said Hodja. "I shall pull out one hair from your beard for every hair you pull out from my donkey's tail. By the time I've pulled out every single hair from your beard, my donkey's tail would also be hairless. Shall we begin?" He rose, walked up to the donkey that was tethered nearby, grabbed its tail and held it out.

"Yes, yes, begin!" called out the Sultan in delight, and the crowd erupted into noisy cheers.

Ibn-Musa was stumped! He had no alternative but to admit defeat before the resourceful Hodja.

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Bonnie and Booboo





Stories from World Mythologies

– A tale from Roman mythology

THE WEAVING CONTEST

Part 2

***Story so far:** Arachne, a village maiden, is a very talented weaver who is famous all over the land for her exquisite work. The nymphs visit her to observe her dexterous weaving style. One of them compliments her by calling her a pupil of Minerva, the patron deity of weaving. However, the proud Arachne retorts that her work is far superior to that of Minerva's any day. This boast is heard by Minerva in heaven. Now read on...*

As the nymphs had feared, Minerva was far from pleased at Arachne's conceited attitude. "That girl is far too proud for her own good," she said to herself. "I think I should call on her and try to talk some sense

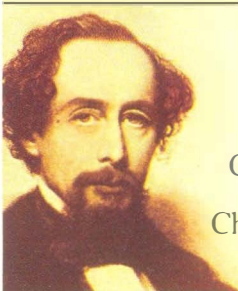
into her."

Some time later, an old woman, bent with age, entered Arachne's cottage and hobbled into the room where she was sitting at her loom. With a smile, she said, "My dear, I come from a faraway land. I've heard about your legendary weaving skill, and I'd like to see your work. May I?"

Now, this was old hat to Arachne, who was quite used to visits from strangers. She offered the old woman a seat and showed her some samples of her tapestry.

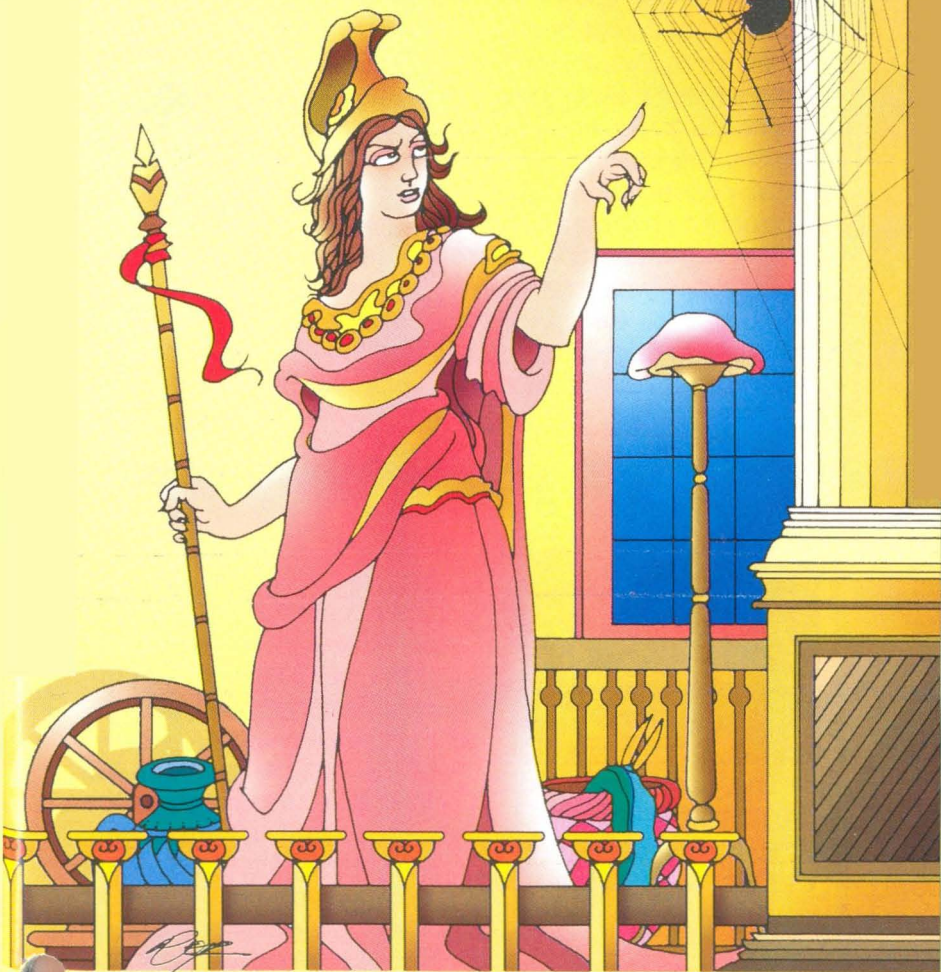
Do You Know?

In 1843, "A Christmas Carol" was written by Charles Dickens in just six weeks.



The guest examined the pieces and said, "Beautiful! Indeed, Arachne, you weave as well as any mortal can."

"Mortal!" exclaimed Arachne, stung



by the remark. "What do you know of weaving, Grandmother, that you speak thus? I say, my work is the best in the whole world, rivalling Minerva's. I wager that if there were to be a contest between us, I'd beat her!"

On hearing this, the smile left the old woman's face. Assuming a serious expression, she said earnestly, "My dear, I'm older and more experienced than you are; so, I trust you'll allow me to give you some friendly advice. You may challenge your fellow human beings as you wish, but don't compete with a goddess. It will prove dangerous for you! I

advise you to ask Minerva's forgiveness for what you have just said. As she is kind and merciful, no doubt she will pardon you."

Arachne's hands, busy at her loom, paused abruptly. She turned and looked sharply at the old woman, with anger and scorn writ large in her glance.

"Grandmother," she said, "you may save your advice for your daughters and grand-daughters; for my part, I don't need it! I know what I say, and I stand by it. I'm not afraid of the goddess; let her come here and pit her skills against mine, if she dares to."

"You say so?" asked the old woman in a low voice. "Very well, then. Here she is!" And she rose to her feet.

The next moment, the shabby trappings of the old woman fell away, revealing the stately figure of Goddess Minerva herself in all her glory.

There was commotion

TRY IT...



The giant panda's diet consists mostly of ...

a) Bananas b) Bamboo
c) Rice d) Milk Duds

(See page 97)

in the room. The nymphs scrambled to their feet, and bowed low in homage. All the others in the room hastened to pay obeisance to the goddess, except one. Arachne alone stood straight and bold. Only the sudden pallor in her cheeks revealed her nervousness.

"Arrogant girl!" thundered Minerva. "You dare compete with me? Very well – you shall have your wish. Let the contest begin!"

Two looms were swiftly set up in the room. The goddess and the maiden took up their positions, and started their work. Both wove skillfully, with the confidence of long practice. Their busy fingers flew back and forth as they each wove rainbows of colours: dark purples, pinks, golds, and crimsons.

The hours sped lightly past for the two weavers. But to the onlookers, who eagerly awaited the outcome of the contest, every minute appeared slow and burdensome.

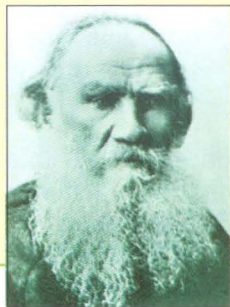
Arachne and Minerva finished their work at almost the same moment. The

bystanders crowded around their looms to see what each had woven.

Arachne's tapestry was a masterpiece of colour and skill. The sky, trees, and flowers were magnificent, and the figures were marvellously realistic and life-like. The subject of her work was the misdemeanours of the gods. She had depicted, in excellent detail, Jupiter, the king of the gods, enticing mortal women in the forms of a swan and a bull.

Minerva's work, on the other hand, depicted the

Do You Know?



Leo Tolstoy wrote a large book called *War and Peace* before computers and copying machines. His wife had to copy his manuscript by hand seven times.



Quiz of the Month

- Prof. NGJ

1. Complete the title of the book: 'Together They Fought:'; a book on the struggle for the independence of India. Name the editors of the book.
2. Oren Arnold, the American novelist gives the following Christmas gift suggestions; to your enemy, forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend your heart, etc.
3. There is a giant Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square in London given as a gift for the people of London. Who gives this gift every year?
4. Who was martyred in his own Cathedral on December 29, 1170?
5. Name the Roman god of Agriculture
6. In Egyptian mythology who is the Queen of Heaven?
7. In the Mahabharata who is the mother of Lakshman?
8. Which are the two main branches of Jainism?
9. On which date is the annual presentation of the Nobel

What is his gift suggestion to every child?

gods sitting in stately grace in heaven. Jupiter sat in their midst, a picture of majestic gravity. Every figure in the tapestry seemed alive, and a golden light emerged from the canvas to bathe the room in radiance.

The onlookers exclaimed in awe and wonder. No doubt Arachne's work was flawless; but Minerva's was ethereal, supernatural! There was no

doubt about it. Arachne was no match for the goddess.

Unable to bear her mortification, Arachne rushed out of the room. Going to the adjoining room, she grabbed a skein of thread. Swiftly she twisted it into a rope, threw one end of it around one of the rafters of the roof and tied the other around her neck to hang herself.

But as Arachne was

Prize made ?

10. What was the immediate cause of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994?
11. Name the ship in which Sir Francis Drake made his circumnavigation of the Globe.
12. Name the author who created the character Jeeves.
13. Name the painting shown and its painter. The image of this painting was one of the most popular Christmas cards printed by Hallmark Cards.

(See page 97)



dangling from the roof, Minerva entered and saw her. "You shall not be allowed to die and be forgotten, Arachne!" she said. "I condemn you to live and remember the lesson you have learnt today."

Minerva then sprinkled some medicinal juices over her. The next moment, a change came over Arachne. Her body shrank and became

round; her hair fell off; eight legs sprouted from her sides. She had turned into a spider!

Arachne could still weave, and she quickly made another intricate web. But as the goddess had taken away her power to weave beautiful designs and colours, her web was a dull grey. To this day, the spider eternally weaves its web, as a lesson to all mortals against vanity. t



Philately

- Prof. George John Nidhiri

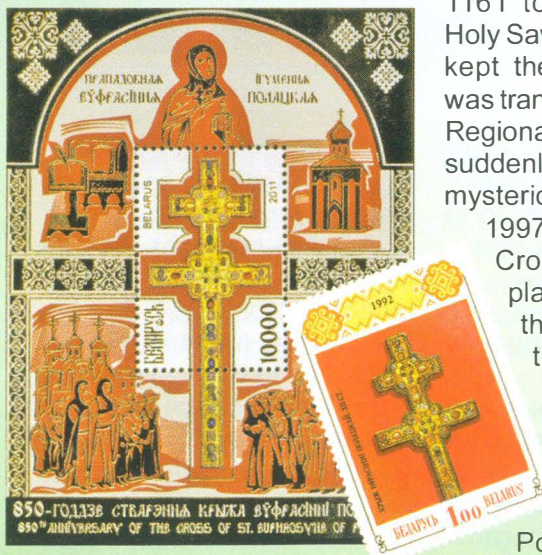
BELARUS — CROSS OF ST. EUPHROSYNE

On 21st March 2011, the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Belarus, issued two Souvenir Sheets to commemorate the 850th

anniversary of the Cross of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk. Belarus was using the postage stamps of the Soviet Union from 1917 till its independence in 1991. In 1992 Belarus issued its first stamp depicting the Cross of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk. St. Euphrosyne is the Patroness of Belarus. The original six-pointed cross was a splendid gem-studded cross created at the command of the saint. It was a golden cross containing relics of several saints. The Cross was presented by the saint in 1161 to the Church of the Holy Saviour in Polotsk. It was kept there till 1929 when it was transferred to the Mogilev Regional Museum. In 1941 it suddenly disappeared amidst mysterious circumstances. In 1997 a full-size copy of the Cross was made. It is now placed in the Church of the Holy Saviour where the original cross was kept.

Brazil - Christ the Redeemer

The Union of Portuguese Speaking



Cities was started in 1985. To commemorate the meeting of this union, Brazil issued a set of two stamps in the



se-tenant form in 1993. Brazil is the only South American country having Portuguese as its official language. One stamp depicts the National Congress building of the Federative Republic of Brazil at Brasília, the new Capital of Brazil established in 1960. It is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The other stamp shows the statue of 'Christ the Redeemer' on the peak known as 'Corcovado' in Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Brazil from 1834 to 1960 and the statue is now considered as one of the new 'Seven Wonders of the World'.

Vatican – Saint Mary Stamps

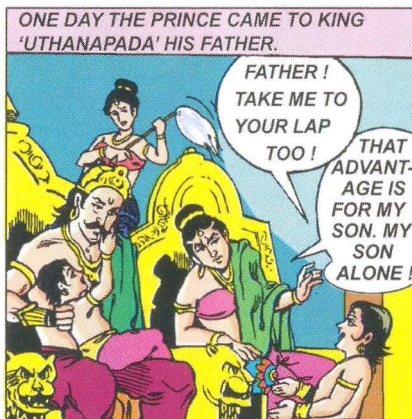
During November – December many countries issue Christmas postage stamps. Usually these postage stamps are based on 'Madonna and Child' paintings. 'Madonna and Child' was a favourite theme for painters especially of the Renaissance period. We can see paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio, Salvador Dali and many others on postage stamps of various countries. In 2002 the Vatican issued ten stamps on the theme 'Our Lady in the Vatican Basilica'. Six stamps are 'Madonna and Child' stamps while four stamps depict the Blessed Virgin Mary without Child Jesus.

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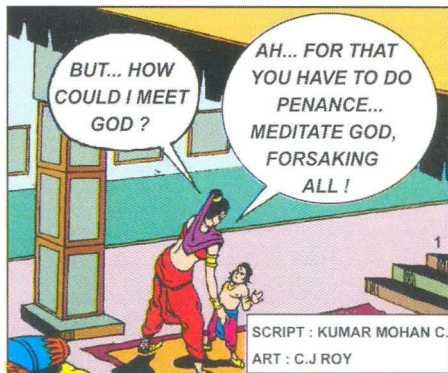
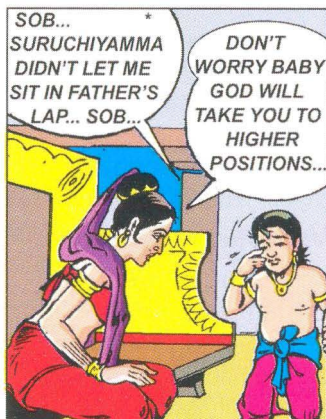


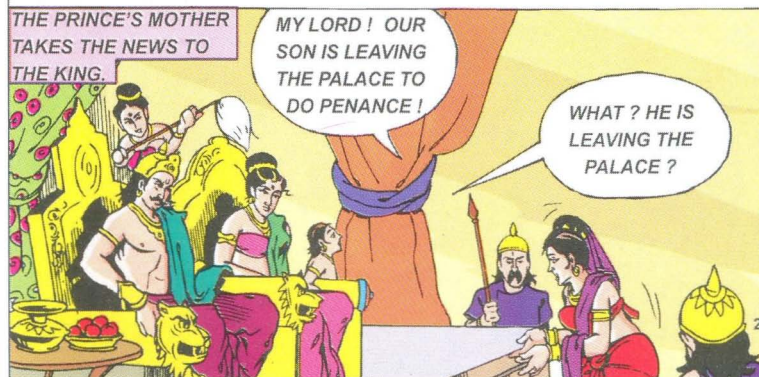
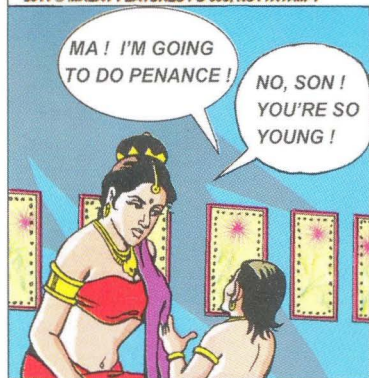
BEREFT OF 'PATERNAL LOVE', A LITTLE BOY WENT INTO DEEP PENANCE LEAVING HIS WORRIED MOTHER AND ALL RELATIVES. LATER HE BECAME A POLE STAR. THE STORY IS IN THE PURANAS... THE STORY OF 'DHURVA TARA'.

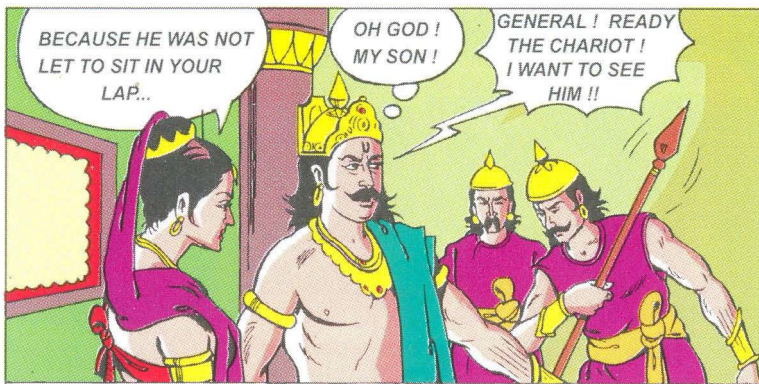
THE POWER OF PENANCE



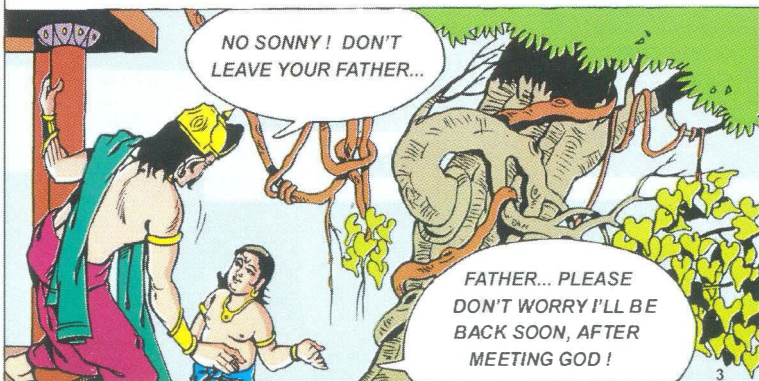
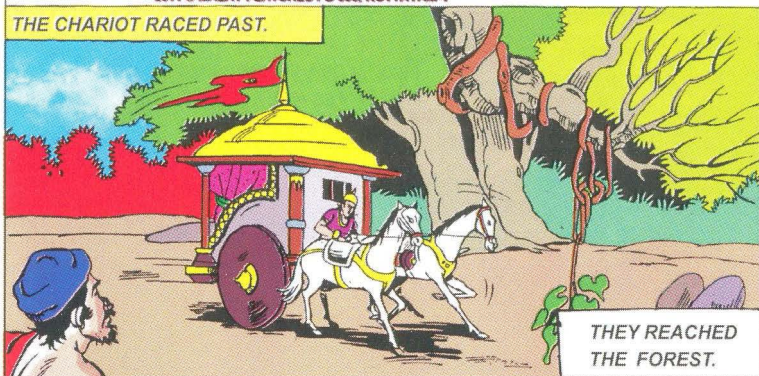
2011 © MALAY FEATURES PB 608, KOTTAYAM-4

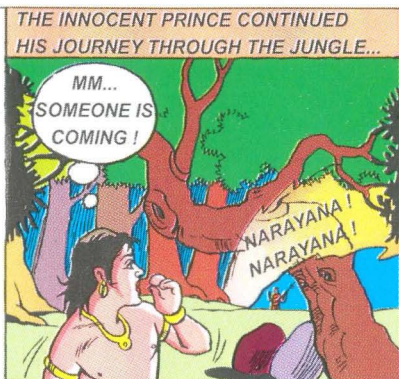
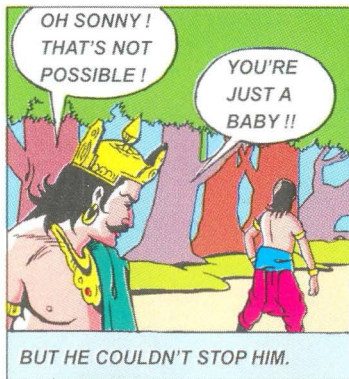




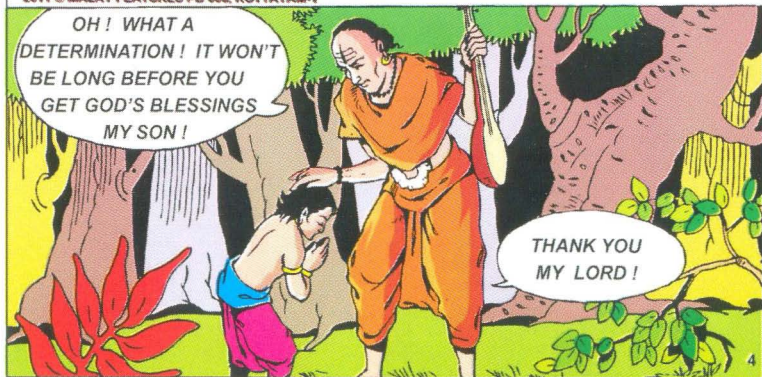


THE CHARIOT RACED PAST.





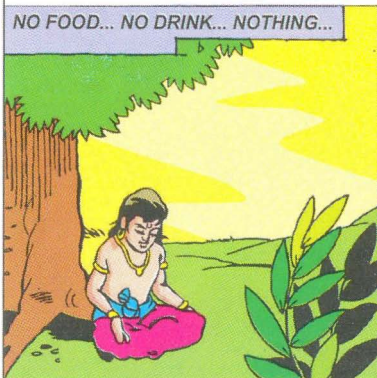
2011 © MALAY FEATURES PB 608. KOTTAYAM-1



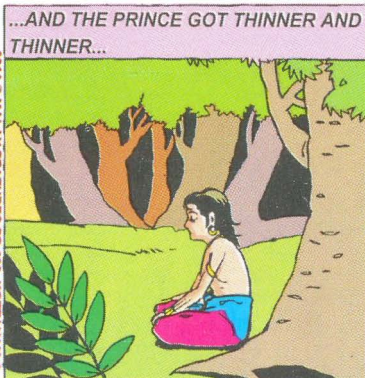
DAYS PASSED...



NO FOOD... NO DRINK... NOTHING...

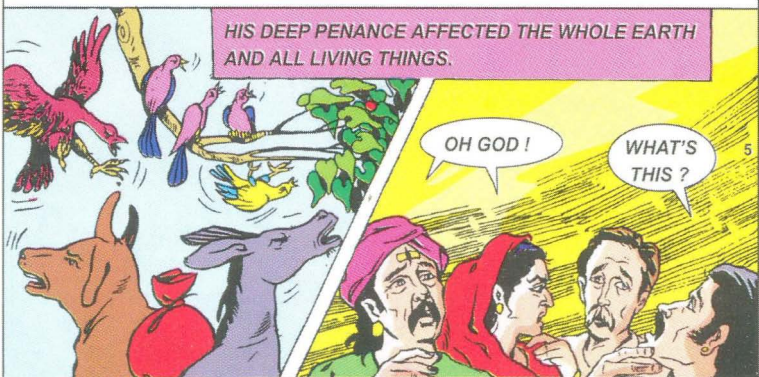


...AND THE PRINCE GOT THINNER AND THINNER...



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HIS DEEP PENANCE AFFECTED THE WHOLE EARTH AND ALL LIVING THINGS.



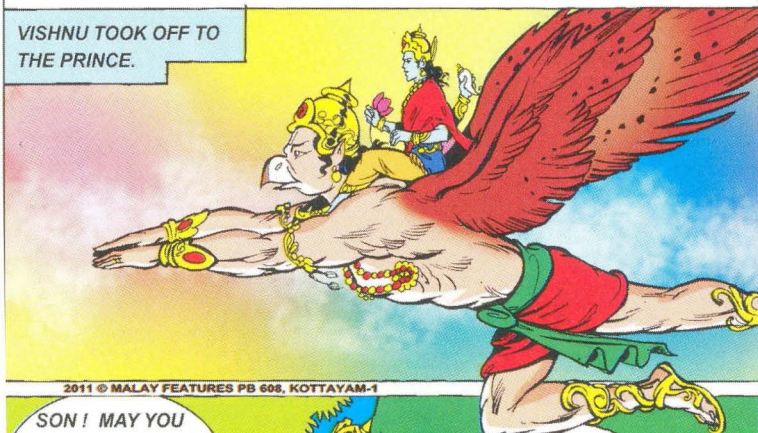
PANICKED GODS APPROACHED VISHNU,
THE GOD OF GODS.

LORD ! WHAT'S
HAPPENING ?
EVERYTHING'S
GOING STILL !

A LITTLE
DEVOTEE OF
MINE IS DOING
PENANCE...
DOWN ON
EARTH...



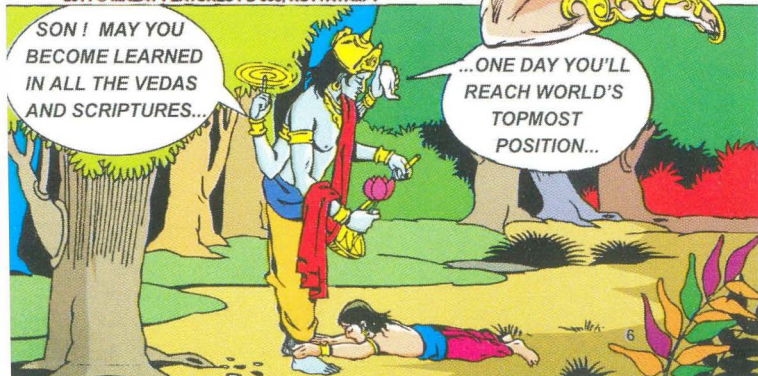
VISHNU TOOK OFF TO
THE PRINCE.

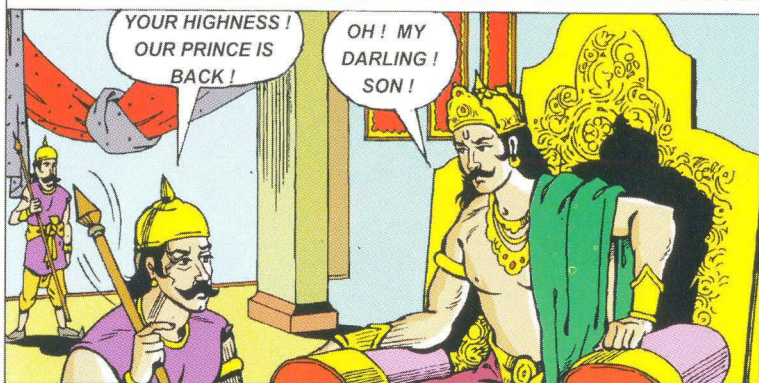
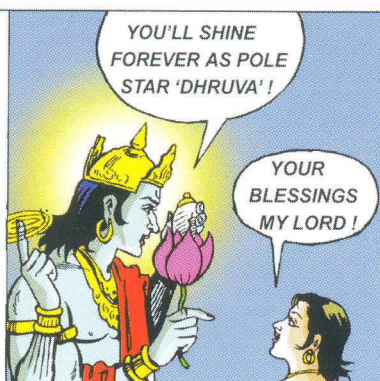
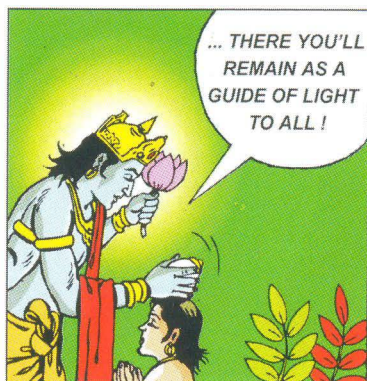


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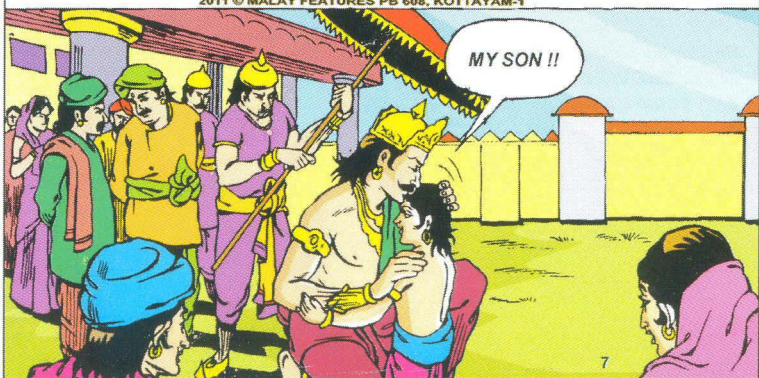
SON ! MAY YOU
BECOME LEARNED
IN ALL THE VEDAS
AND SCRIPTURES...

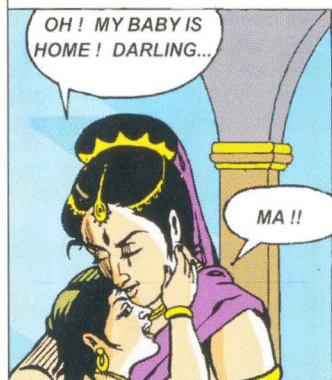
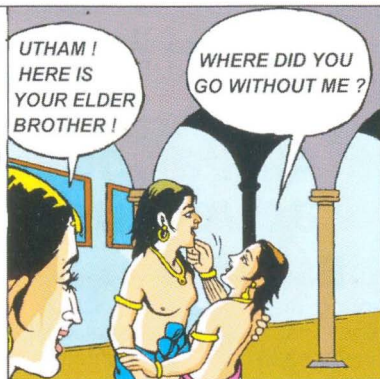
...ONE DAY YOU'LL
REACH WORLD'S
TOPMOST
POSITION...





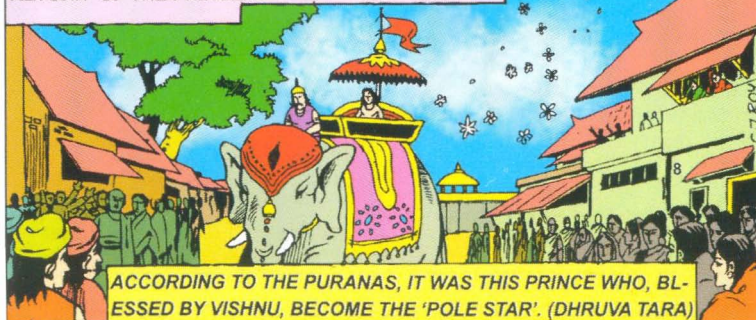
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JOY FILLS THE PALACE, PEOPLE CHEERED AT THE RETURN OF THE PRINCE.





A Leaf out of Literature

A hilarious adventure

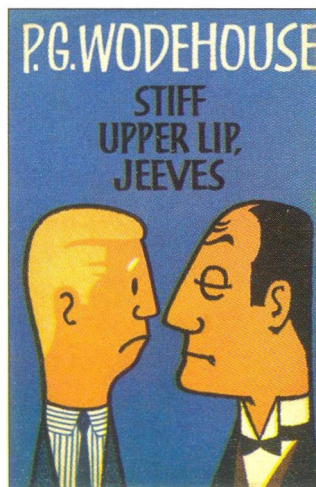
Bertram ('Bertie') Wooster, the rich young man-about-town, is on cloud nine. His indispensable valet, Jeeves – who can always be counted upon to extricate him from all kinds of scrapes – is back after a spell at Bertie's Aunt Dahlia's country residence, to help her out at a house-party.

Bertie is surprised to hear from Jeeves that the guests at the party included Aunt Dahlia's neighbour, Sir Watkyn Bassett, and his daughter Madeline. The reason for the surprise is that Aunt Dahlia's husband, Uncle Tom, detests Sir Watkyn as both the men are rival collectors of antique silver.

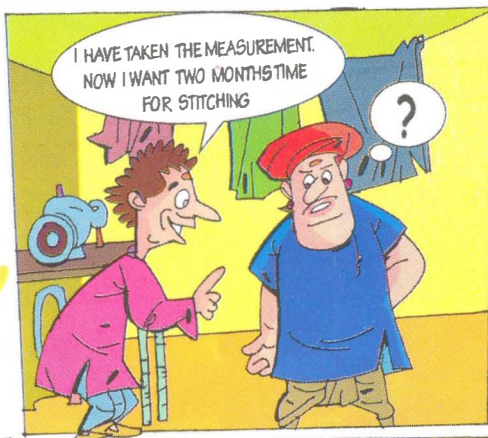
However, Bertie's joy is short-lived as he soon gets some disturbing news. He is in an awkward position with Madeline Bassett, as she mistakenly believes that he is in love with her. She is engaged to Bertie's friend Gussie Fink-Nottle, but has made it clear that if ever the engagement should be broken, she would marry only Bertie. The prospect of marrying Madeline terrifies him. Now, to his consternation, Bertie learns that the romance is on shaky ground because of Madeline's insistence that her fiancé should turn vegetarian.

Bertie is now forced to visit Madeline's home, Totleigh Towers, to bring about a rapprochement. But this is easier said than done, because of Sir Watkyn's hostility as he is convinced that the real motive of Bertie's visit is to steal the newest addition to his antique collection – a black statuette – for his uncle!

What ordeals await Bertie at Totleigh Towers, and can the resourceful Jeeves succeed in rescuing him? To find out, read *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* – a laugh riot by P. G. Wodehouse. This hilarious classic, originally published in 1963, continues to provide readers with side-splitting entertainment to this day.



THINGS IN HASTE

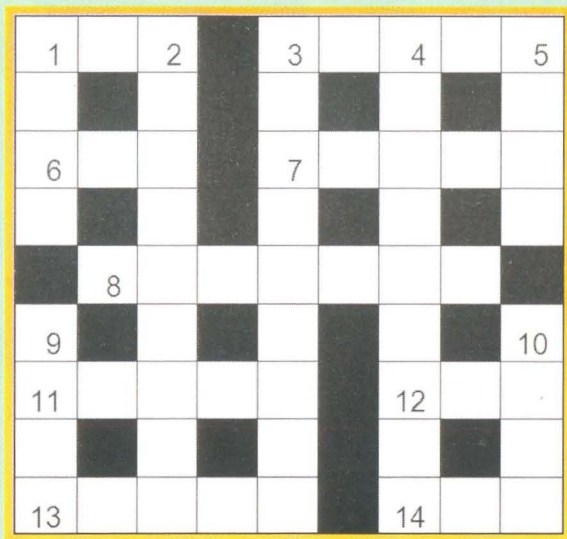


@vega features



Crossword

- K.S. Geethavani, Coimbatore



ACROSS

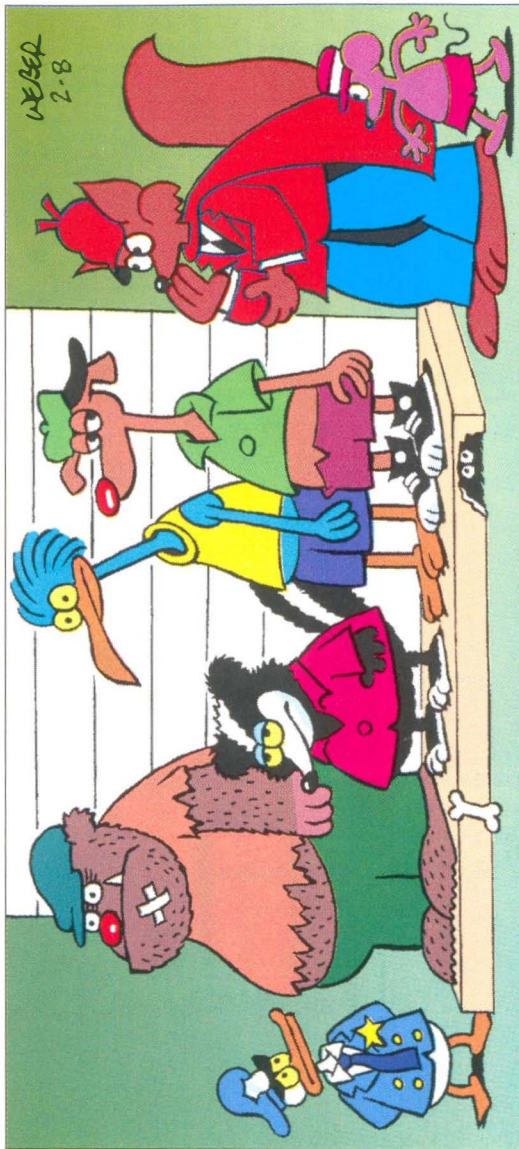
1. Urgent signal for help (3)
3. Exhilarate (5)
6. Enjoyable, amusing (3)
7. Convention on
International Trade in
Endangered Species (5)
8. Not deep (7)
11. Useful quality; advantage,
benefit, (5)
12. Request, question (3)
13. One who hoards money (5)
14. Pull vehicle by rope (3)

DOWN

1. Cabinet for money
and valuables,
sometimes secret (4)
2. Combination (9)
3. Moving stairs (9)
4. Man in space (9)
5. Not difficult (4)
9. Between fingers and
wrist (4)
10. Distort, twist (4)

(See page 97)

Slylock Fox



One of these suspects robbed a jewelry store. When the thief entered the store he did not brandish a weapon and spoke not a word, yet the clerks and customers fled. In their absence, he grabbed all the diamonds and gold he could carry. Which suspect does Slylock Fox think is the thief?

(See page 97)



JOHAN HAILS FROM A RICH FAMILY IN MELBON. HE WAS STUDYING IN ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL.

SIR, I INVITE YOU TO OUR HOME ON CHRISTMAS EVE

JOHAN, IT IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE FOR ME



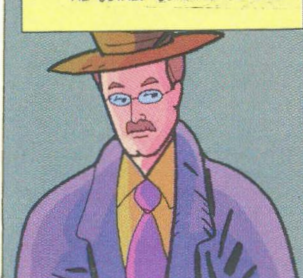
MY PAPPA SPECIALLY INVITES YOU



SIR, SEE YOU ON CHRISTMAS EVE

OK, JOHAN

JOHAN'S TEACHER BENJAMIN WAS AT SAINIK SCHOOL. AFTER RETIREMENT HE JOINED JOHAN'S SCHOOL.



CHRISTMAS NIGHT! SKY IS FULL OF TWINKLING STARS. BENJAMIN IS ON HIS WAY TO JOHAN'S HOME.



I THINK I AM A LITTLE LATE

BENJAMIN WONDERED ON SEEING THE BIG HOUSE OF JOHAN

WAH! GREAT! IT IS AS BIG AS A PALACE. THOUGH JOHAN IS RICH, HE CONTINUES TO BE A STUDENT OF A MIDDLE CLASS SCHOOL

JOHAN'S FAMILY IS WAITING FOR BENJAMIN.

WELCOME, SIR, WE WERE EXPECTING YOU

WE KNOW MUCH ABOUT YOU FROM JOHAN. WE ADMIRE YOU SIR.

THANK YOU SO MUCH

WHEN BENJAMIN WAS TALKING WITH JOHAN'S FATHER, AN OLD MAN CAME AT THE DOOR.

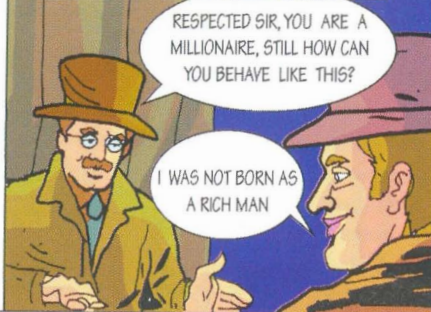
OH! HE IS A BEGGAR. STILL HE IS BEING WELCOMED

PLEASE COME IN, WHY DO YOU HESITATE?

JOHAN'S FATHER TOOK HIM NEAR THE FIRE PLACE AND GAVE HIM WARM SOUP TO DRINK.



BEING VERY CURIOUS, BENJAMIN ASKED.



YEARS AGO ON A CHRISTMAS NIGHT LIKE THIS I DID NOT GET ANYTHING TO EAT.



BUT TODAY I HAVE ALL THE LUXURIES. I KNOW IT IS NOT ETERNAL AND I SHOULD NOT FORGET THE PAST



Civega features

I AM VERY PARTICULAR THAT MY SON SHOULD GROW AS A GOOD MAN. THAT IS WHY I DON'T WANT HIM TO STUDY IN THE SCHOOL OF RICH PEOPLE



JOHAN HAS KEPT A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOU



Answers

FUN WITH WORDS

Crack the code

- 1) All in all
- 2) Adding insult to injury
- 3) Good afternoon
- 4) Hand in hand
- 5) Foreign language
- 6) Repeat after me
- 7) An eye for an eye

Treasure Hunt

- 1) Coral; 2) Opal; 3) Sapphire; 4) Ruby; 5) Emerald; 6) Garnet; 7) Amethyst; 8) Jade; 9) Diamond.

LOGIMAGIC

Solution: 17 minutes.

This is how they do it:

First, Seema and Kamala walk across, sharing the umbrella.

This takes them 2 minutes (Kamala's speed).

Next, Seema walks back with the umbrella (1 minute).

Shyam and Kishore cross next (at Kishore's speed – 10 minutes).

Kamala now returns with the umbrella (2 minutes).

Seema and Kamala cross over together (2 minutes).

Total time = $2+1+10+2+2 = 17$ minutes

(Note: There is an alternative solution whereby Kamala walks back first with the umbrella and Seema makes the second trip. The time taken is the same.)

TRY IT...

Page 64

Number 4.

Page 74

b)

QUIZ OF THE MONTH

1. 'Together They Fought: Gandhi – Nehru Correspondence 1921 – 48'. Editors : Uma lyenger and Lalitha Zachariah
2. To every child, a good example
3. The people of Oslo, Norway.
4. St. Thomas Becket
5. Saturn
6. Isis
7. Sumitra
8. Digambara and Swetambara
9. December 10
10. The assassination of the Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana
11. The Golden Hind
12. P. G. Wodehouse
13. 'Beneath the Snow Encumbered Branches' by Joseph Farquharson.

CROSSWORD

Across: 1. SOS 3. Elate 6. Fun 7. CITES 8. Shallow 11. Asset 12. Ask 13. Miser 14. Tow

Down: 1. Safe 2. Synthesis 3. Escalator 4. Astronaut 5. Easy 9. Palm 10. Skew

SLYLOCK FOX

Solution:

Slylock believes everyone ran from the store to get away from the stinky skunk. Slylock suspects the skunk is the thief.



Jest a Minute!

- Rajee Raman

Two men were struggling with an enormous cupboard, trying to carry it across the doorway. They pushed, heaved and tugged, but to no avail. It would go in a bit, only to bounce back the next moment.

After nearly fifteen minutes of fruitless effort, the man nearest the door sighed in exasperation and declared, "It's no good! We're never going to get this huge thing in."

"What! *In*?" exclaimed the other man in chagrin. "All this time, I thought we were trying to get it *out* of the room!"

A man walked into the textile showroom and said to the salesman, "I want to try out that suit in the window."

The salesman calmly answered, "I'm sorry, sir, but you'll have to use the dressing-room."

The teacher asked the class, "Can anyone name a man who owed his success to sheer luck?"

A boy stood up and answered, "Christopher Columbus."

"How do you say that?" asked the teacher.

"Well," said the boy, "when he started, he didn't know where he was going. When he got there, he didn't know where he was; and when he returned, he didn't know where he had been."

"Your hair is getting thin, sir," remarked the barber to the customer.

"Oh, that's all right," answered the customer. "Who wants fat hair?"

